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Travels East of Suez

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Hindu Columns at Kutub Minar, Delhi.

Travels East of Suez

BY

RACHEL HUMPHREYS, F.R.G.S.

Author of
"Algiers, the Sahara and the Nile."

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CONTENTS

	PAGE
Through the Gateway of the East	7
Aden to Ceylon	13
Colombo	15
The Buried Cities	25
Kandy	31
The Tea Gardens and Nuwara Eliya	38
Colombo Again	46
Calcutta	54
The Indian Rifle Factory	67
Sunrise on the Himalayas	70
Sam Sing	78
Indian Customs	88
Indian Marriage Ceremony	102
Benares and Lucknow	114
Agra	129
Fatepur Sikri	135
Delhi	148
Bombay	154
Burma and Rangoon	170
"On the Road to Mandalay"	180
The Irrawaddy	192
Bhamo	198
The River and Customs	206
Burmese Manners and Customs	216

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List of Illustrations

	FACING PAGE
A Burmese Beauty, Bhamo	200
A Curve on the Darjeeling Railway	70
A Street in Agra	128
"An Awkward Meeting"	79
Benares	114
Bhamo, Upper Burma	203
Bhutian Women	100
Bhutians at Darjeeling	96
Breakfast in the Shwe Dagon Pagoda, Rangoon	171
Doing "Pujah" by the Wayside in Ceylon	28
Drawing Water, India	62
Entrance to Shwe Dagon Pagoda, Rangoon	173
Gathering Tea, Ceylon	41
Group of Hindus	55
Hindu Columns at Kutub Minar, Delhi	Frontispiece
Lascars Arriving after Disinfection at Suez	168
Mending a Bridge, Ceylon	48
Mosque at Kutub Minar, Delhi	158
Native Ferry Boat, Teesta River, Dooars	84
Native Refreshment Stall at Wayside Indian Station	110
Ready for the Start, Sam Sing	81
Ruins at Kutub Minar, Delhi	103
Shwe Dagon Pagoda, Rangoon	219
The Arakan Pagoda, Mandalay	180
The Broken Bridge, Ceylon	17
The Chandni Chauk, Delhi	148
The Great Image, Arakan Pagoda	190
The "Hathi pilin' Teak," Rangoon	178
The Potter at his Wheel, Agra	140
Waiting for the Ferry, Irrawaddy	194
Waiting for the Train, India	126
Wayside Scene, Ceylon	10

CHAPTER I.

THROUGH THE EASTERN GATEWAY.

DEAR ———,

You remember, don't you, that you said you wanted to have the second volume of my wanderings in the East, especially in India, Ceylon, and Burmah? Well, I will tell you of the sunny days "East of Suez."

Did you know that I had really fixed to go with C—— to the West Indies? Now for a bit that you will scoff at. I interviewed a clairvoyante, being supposed to be somewhat psychic myself. Quoth she: "You are thinking of a voyage and are going to India." This was in the September before I started. "No," I replied. "Yes, I see India most clearly." Still I said emphatically "No." "Well, do you mind telling me why you are so positive?" "Because my passage is already booked and the cabin chosen on the —— for the West Indies." "Ah, I'm sorry, but I am sure you will go East and not West." At the end of the next month we veered round, and the East it was. Now, what do you say to that? Well, I cannot say I was sorry, as "once you've 'eard the East a-callin', you won't never 'eed naught else"; and the spell grew stronger and stronger with every

turn of the screws which bring us quickly to Port Said.

Port Said, the despised, the refuse heap for all the nations of the East, is nevertheless a name to conjure with, as it is the gate of the East—the East with all its mysteries, its glamour, its history, its wonders. The first glimpse of Eastern dress is delightful: such a complete change from the last place ashore—Marseilles. Here the Arabs are in their long garments down to their feet, and their red fez on their heads. At first one believes they are women, till one remembers they would be veiled. Crowds of little boats come round to take you ashore, the rowers black as ink perhaps, coming up from Somaliland, or brown in tint from the desert. The unceasing shrill chatterings of all of them make a strange sound to one's ears; it is quite musical—ever rising and falling like a number of birds in a state of jubilation. One cannot help a thrill of excitement as one sees all the gaily-coloured crowds about. It is vastly amusing to walk up the chief street from the landing place. All the shopkeepers are at their doors inviting you in to see all their treasures—this place the best for feathers, this for the finest embroideries in the world, this for the best cigarettes, etc. In one shop we were looking at parasols, when the polite Armenian implored our friend who was escorting us to look at some pyjamas. This rather embarrassed him in the presence of ladies, and he made a discreet bolt for the door, not knowing what might be offered to him next!

What a lively scene it is to watch, under the shady trees which line the street, groups sitting on the footpath outside the chief hotel, surrounded by hawkers of beads, necklaces, ornaments, feathers—almost everything; fortune-tellers squatting on the ground, gravely reading the hands of grey-haired men who would scorn to be seen doing such a thing in Europe! Conjurors have a little group round them, showing their prowess in making one chicken into two; "Gully, gully, gully," says he, and lo! the poor little wretched yellow chick is presumably torn in two, and behold a pair! The sherbet-seller in his shining panoply of brass jugs, trays, glasses and big can, tinkling the brass together to attract attention; the little "street Arabs" (literally so here) playing about, bumping in one's way, and scuttling off when you come out with a strong "Imshi." A word or two of suitable strength in their own tongue has a wonderful effect on natives in most parts. They give you credit for a large vocabulary, and treat you with more respect; and, what is better, keep their distance.

The row back to the ship in a small boat at night was most picturesque. Through the crowd of shipping, brilliantly lighted up, we picked our way out to the steamer, which was surrounded by rafts of coal, on which large braziers were being burnt to light the Arab coalers, the very scummiest of the scum of humanity, men and women on their way up and down, tilting the coal into the bunkers. It really would have done for a study of "stoking up the underworld," the blackness of the coal, the

blazing fires, the sparks flying up into the dark night, and these figures flitting about. Port Said is the largest coaling station in the world, and is famous for the rapidity with which the work is done. Two hundred tons can be shipped in one hour.

Think of a nice bright spring day, soft air, bright sunshine and blue sky, a day England sometimes gives us in the spring of the year. Such was December 11th at Port Said, where the big P. and O. *Maloja* was majestically resting in the mouth of the canal waiting for the mail boat from Brindisi. We had already been there twenty-four hours, when the *Isis* arrived, panting and throbbing from her race across the Mediterranean, bringing letters and parcels and a few passengers to join us. Twenty-three knots an hour this little vessel of 1,700 tons can do, and that means more vibration than one would really care to have! How small she looks lying close alongside the big *Maloja* of 12,500 tons, her deck not even reaching the spar-deck of the latter, and what a change of scene; the donkey-engine had been ready all the morning to work the huge cranes which now first swung up enormous planks to act as gangways, pushed into place by an army of Arabs, as well as by the Lascars on the boat. I say Arabs, but all races seemed to be there, the real Arab, the whitey-brown Egyptian, the Indian, the real black from Somaliland, the Nubian with his three tribe cuts on his cheek and black skin and shining eyes and teeth—the latter do shine without a doubt—all hurrying, shouting, gesticulating, making an extraordinary din. Then

Wayside Scene, Ceylon.

comes the voice of the headman shouting orders, the hatches are opened, and as each man shoulders a sack, a wooden tally is given him, which he gives up to the checker on the *Maloja* as he shoots his load down and is off again to pick up another. In the well-deck a heap soon gathers, and Lascars pitch the sacks over the hatch down into the depths below, where others are on the watch for them. A weird cry is given each time; and black faces and bright turbaned heads quickly draw back out of the line of fire—should I rather say throw? Bang goes another sack, labelled Bombay perhaps,—Auckland—Ceylon—all are marked and stowed away in the order in which they are to come out. The Indian and East African are coming off at Aden, while those for Ceylon and Straits Settlements go on to Colombo, and the Australian bags have a good long rest before they are unpacked, when the *Maloja* reaches her long journey's end.

All this began at midday; and throughout the long afternoon the scurrying goes on, up to dinner-time; then when we go out on deck afterwards the scene has changed from sunlight to a weird picture like a stage scene; the electric lights hung up in all directions throw a brilliant light on a most lurid group. Still shouting, still scurrying, still gesticulating with outstretched hand, the blacks are working, the 9,000 bags are not yet on, nor the 500 cases of parcel post. It is like a huge ant-heap; and to watch the faces of the passengers as they lean over the taffrail shows what an absorbing sight it is. One could stand—as one did—for hours

watching them. At last it gets finished; the Port Police in uniform and red fez take a final look round; the planks are attached to the rope, and hooked up by the crane, and stacked out of the way on the *Maloja;* the siren gives a fierce hoot, and away the little goddess goes; salutes are exchanged by the officers and men, parting hand-shakes, and parting hits among the natives, too! Now the vessel has gone, and the bridge of planks must be hitched off over the side, down into the sea as it seemed,—but no, a small boat has run under, and another one has arrived at the critical moment to take them off. Every one now rushes to the bow to watch the slow entry into the Suez Canal; four bells (ten o'clock) sound before we start, and majestically, with huge searching flashlight ahead, the big ship, going almost on her own weigh, enters the darkness. The electric light has a very peculiar effect on the sandy banks, making them appear like snow, and any figures that may be about look ghostly in the clear atmosphere. The stars are all wonderfully bright, twinkling a welcome to us—calling us back to the East—that overwhelming call! who can resist it?

CHAPTER II.

ADEN TO CEYLON.

THE approach to Aden is very fine, the high rocky mountains stand out in the blazing sunshine rugged and bare and sharp of outline. It does not bear the best of names; for instance, quite recently a man and his wife were going back from the shore to the boat, and when half-way the men stopped for baksheesh—gold—and had to be threatened with a revolver before they would go on. One lands at Steamer Point amid a crowd of queer, very queer, vehicles, all ready to drive visitors to the Tanks, the only objective in Aden. These are enormous pits hollowed out of the side of the rock to hold water, so they are really the reservoirs to hold the rain which is expected once a year, but of late years has hardly come so often. The Tanks are attributed to King Solomon. The heat is intense, reflected from the high rocks on either side—not a blade of grass nor a plant to be seen—a few trees, banyans and palms, but the arid rocks look grimly down on them and seem almost to forbid their growth. A vulture was sitting motionless up on one of their jutting out-points. It is certainly a very desolate spot, and most hopeless-looking when the pits are dry, as that means that all the water has to be distilled from the sea. One of the features

of Aden, by the way, is the camel carts, which are constantly drawing water about. The Ancient Mariner might well say there: "Water, water everywhere, and not a drop to drink." Some of our regiments are quartered in Aden, and I fancy the Tommies must find it pretty dull, though many officers whom I know speak well of the time they spent there. Scenic effect is excellent, at any rate; the presence of particles of desert sand in the air increases the marvellous sunset colours—in fact, that is really the reason why sunsets are so very wonderful when one is anywhere near a desert. The one that evening was typical, a perfectly hard line, like the arc of a circle, dividing pale green from deep-blue sky flecked with white clouds, then deepening into rose and crimson, and at last the reddest of red glow behind the sharp-cut peaks of the mountains, which showed up in wonderful contrast. There is a mystery about this wonderful Eastern colour. Who was the god of colour? Surely there was one, and no wonder at his being worshipped—or was it only the Sun God that was the origin of it all? To see the full moon rise behind these peaks, too, was a joy; it seemed so huge in that clear atmosphere, and sailed up in extraordinarily quick time; first came the silvery light behind the black mountain, then a tiny streak of moon, and while you watched, the whole moon came into full view. Some of the passengers most irreverently compared it to a stage moon, it was so rapid in its rise!

CHAPTER III.

COLOMBO.

FROM Aden we had a splendid voyage to Colombo, where we arrived in the early morning, so our first view of the Paradise of the East was the best possible. The harbour is very interesting, and has not the dirty look about it which many harbours have. Catamarans were plentiful—the native boats, which are simply a tree trunk, dug out and then flattened at the top. From this is balanced a kind of raft, consisting of two poles of wood at right angles, about ten feet long, and connected at the end by a float; and in bad weather one, two or three men go out and sit on the cross-piece to keep it balanced, and so the saying, a "one man," "two man," or "three man" breeze, originated.

What makes the entry into Colombo so charming is the fact that you walk straight up from a very good pier through a wide open space, into one of the chief streets, so that no objectionable and squalid parts are passed. It all looked so delightful that, even before going to our hotel, we got into a motor and took a look round for a couple of hours. Motors there have their hoods up, as the sun is nearly vertical; and solar topees and umbrellas or thick sunshades are absolutely necessary. It is evident how near the equator one is, when one looks for one's

shadow; it is there not carrying out an Eastern greeting—may your shadow never grow less! for there is hardly any of it, in the middle of the day it is just beneath you!

The joy of that motor run was enhanced by contrast with our voyage, and by having had nothing but sea to look at for so long, but the beauty of it was all its own—such roads, rare tunnels of palm trees of all kinds, hedges of crotons, flowering shrubs rioting with blossoms of all colours, the picturesquely-built bungalows with no chimneys and no fantastic architecture, such as we get in England nowadays, to mar their beauty, all set back from the road in gardens of choice greenhouse flowers, as we should call them at home. Then the natives, how quaint they look—"chocolate soldiers"—the men mostly bare to the waist, with either a loin cloth or a skirt of white material pleated round them, their long glossy black hair being rolled up into a knot at the back, and with their ear-rings and the wonderful tortoise-shell comb of semi-circular shape, worn on their heads they give the impression of being women. This comb is only worn by the men after the age of twenty-five; they are quite expensive ornaments, being made from the hawk's bill turtle, and cost about sixteen rupees or a guinea. It is really very charming to see the waiters at the hotels, all in white coats and skirts, with these combs on their heads.

Talking of servants makes one think of the first night at the Galle Face Hotel. I had to go down a long corridor to my room, and as it happened I

The Broken Bridge, Ceylon.

was rather late going up to bed, when round the corner I got a fearful shock at seeing these native servants, each one lying flat on a white sheet outside the doors of their masters' rooms. They looked for all the world like a lot of corpses laid out; it is the usual thing, I found afterwards, for the travelling servants to sleep thus. My servant, a black as ink Mohammedan, whom I had engaged through friends, did not want to come to Ceylon, as he says in the following letter, so I met him later at Calcutta :—

> "Please Miss Sahib, I most humbly and respectfully beg to lay these following few lines before your kind consideration that Miss M. has been engage me for you and only I am waiting for you and I have send a letter before hoping you will get it soon—and I shall be highly thankful if you kindly reply soon as you get these letters as Mrs. M. wrote me to meet you at Colombo I am glad to come but there is *corntine* they will keep me in Hospital for ten days so I think it will be much better I shall meet Miss Sahib at Calcutta. I will be there before 2 days in the office of Thomas Cooks in Calcutta I will stay there for you kindly enquire me at arrival time and please kindly inform me when you will meet me at Calcutta and in what ship you are coming let me know name of ship Please Miss Sahib kindly send two letters 1 for Thomas Cook & Son Calcutta and 1 letter to my house that it will meet me soon Hoping you will excuse me

for this trouble for God I beg to remain please Miss Sahib your most humble servant."

All that, and only one stop! This is the other letter he speaks of, evidently written by another Babu :—

"HONOURED MADAM,

"I beg to say I have received a letter through Thomas Cook & Son Bombay from Mrs. M. saying that she has been recommended me to your ladyship to travel in India, I am accept it and quite willing to meet you any place Calcutta or Bombay. I cannot come to Colombo because there is *quarantane* for Plage. Please write me to Lucknow and also a letter C/o Thomas Cook & Son Calcutta. I will meet you in Calcutta. Please answer.

"Your obedient servant,

"IMDAD ALI."

So we had to wait till we found him in Calcutta, or, rather, he found us, about which more anon!

The trees shade the roads and streets in Colombo gloriously, some called Katu Imbul or rain trees, because at night the leaves curl up and the moisture condenses, and then when they burst open again at sunrise, this moisture is thrown out like a miniature shower of rain. The streets and roads are a rich red colour, which is most helpful to the eyes, as if they were white, I don't know how anyone would see, the glare of the tropical sun would be so intense; but the red dust is fatal to one's clothes. The way they all live in public is so amusing to the Western eye; there are neither

doors, windows nor shutters to the native shops and houses, especially in the road beyond Colpetty. Toilets are made in public, if you can call them by such a dignified name, when the performance only consists of washing at the nearest tap, coiling up the long hair into a "knob," and setting the comb on it. A few deft turns and twists are enough to fasten the skirt, and the Cingalee native is ready for the day! If he wants to be shaved he walks a few steps, finds a barber, and they both squat down on their haunches opposite each other, at a street corner for preference, or just under the shade of a tree. The shoe-maker or mender will sit on the footway if there is one, or in the street if not, and does repairs while you wait.

The shops are hung with their own specialities, fruits of all possible kind and vegetables, curry ingredients, which are many and various, in allusion to which I may say that at one friend's house no less than eight different things were handed round with the rice and curry, which you are expected to pile up on the top of the rice, and then mash up with a spoon; whatever happens, you must eat it with a spoon, to do otherwise argues yourself a sad ignoramus of Oriental customs. One peculiarity strikes a stranger, and that is the washing of one's clothes in the central lake, or "tank" as the local term is for it. This is quite a large sheet of water in the very centre of Colombo, with lovely bungalows round, roads winding by, and fringed with palm trees. In the water, standing waist deep, are the dhobies banging the linen

on to the rocks—a most economical way of proceeding for them; but, alas for one's clothes! In this lake are also washed the bullocks and their carts, and also any passer-by who would like a dip; and I must say the Cingalese are awfully fond of a bath in any water they come to. But all this does not impart a hue of snowy whiteness to one's linen, and one sometimes wonders where it spent the night to be ironed. I got into the way of sending it off one night and having it back next evening, so that it should not be long in the native hands, as the dhobi caste is quite a low one, and therefore there are queer dwellings for the men—of laundresses there are none. The only drawback to that was that the dhobi always brought the washing back just when one was getting ready for dinner, and would insist in coming into one's room, regardless of one's attire, and arranging the clothes out on the bed, then gravely salaaming, would wait to be paid.

Certainly the view of the lake from some of the gardens of the bungalows is very entrancing, the water peeping out between the trees with their lovely flowers, bamboos hanging in graceful fringes, the dark-leaved hibiscus with its glorious flowers of crimson, pale yellow blooms on the lettuce tree, and tall plaintain or bananas waving their huge leaves aloft. But the full beauty is seen in some of the roads, bordered with lovely gardens, with bungalows set back well from the road; perhaps the hedges are of crotons, or canna in full flower, great palms with cocoanuts ripe and ready to drop

from a tunnel overhead, and to ride through these at dusk is charming, with the silent-footed coolie padding along, drawing your rubber-tyred rickshaw so silently that you can hear the wonderful buzzing and song of the night insects—quite a feature of tropical life, and most musical. Always directly after sunset, at the first hint of dusk, they begin with their busy hum, the whole lighted up with brilliant flies winging their mysterious flights in the air among the trees. Then the banyan trees are a great source of wonder, the extremely long branches sent out from the parent stem get too heavy for their own weight, and send down a rootlet, which, when it touches the ground, takes root, and grows and thickens, till a new stem is formed; and sometimes the circumference of these trees becomes enormous, and forms quite a shelter place.

The cinnamon-gardens used to be out in the suburbs, and were the chief feature of the place when the hymn, "Waft, waft ye spicy breezes, from Ceylon's lovely isle" was composed, but they have disappeared to a great extent to give place to bungalows, with their large "compounds," as I should call the gardens. Naturally, in these alluring groves, birds are to be found of many kinds, with brightly-hued plumage, and various calls, new to one's ear.

The crows, of course, are ubiquitous; they are the scavengers, and right well do they perform their duties. A dead rat on the road does not lie there long before it is taken possession of by these noisy folk. In the Galle Face Hotel, printed

notices are put up in the bedrooms warning visitors not to leave anything lying about on account of the black crows. I at first laughed at this, till, one morning, I had moved a small table within sight of the window with the remains of mangoes and papaw fruit on it and a spoon on the plate, and while I walked the length of the room three of these observant birds were on the table eating up the remains! For impudence, watchfulness, noisy talkativeness, commend me to a Ceylon crow! They have no respect for place or person.

Along the road one often sees the betel-sellers with a little heap in front of them, or carrying a little stand or frame, which holds the curved-up leaves of the betel, in which are areca nut finely sliced up, chunam or lime made from burnt oyster shells, or coral. This the natives chew, much in the same way as some nations do tobacco or gum; it is supposed to have a soothing effect on them, but it stains their lips and teeth a horrible red, which looks too suggestive of blood. Every native has a box somewhere amongst his scanty garments containing this trinity of delicacies; and the rich native generally has a silver one in which he carries his; and old betel boxes are quite valuable, as they represent a custom which dates back before the present era. It gives rise to a good trade; you see simply heaps of the leaves stacked up in the shops, all ready to be filled up with the ingredients. I bought one of these, ready rolled up, at a station one day and examined it, and at the next station presented it to a native on the platform, who took

it with delighted grins, but was evidently wonderfully surprised at a white woman having such a thing. About twenty tons of these leaves are sent from one place alone every week, and it is estimated that thousands of tons are used in Colombo alone. It is really quite a pretty sight to see a betel-seller with his little stand squatting on the ground by the roadside, patiently waiting for customers.

The clubs of Colombo are a great feature, with charming gardens, which, at dusk, on Sunday evenings particularly, are lighted up with Chinese lanterns, while the military band plays. On one of the evenings I was there, the Governor and his party were having tea; he arrived with a sort of little state procession, two outriders in native dress in front and behind his carriage, with lances held aloft, and flowing pennons. The golfers have a splendid club-house and fine links, to which an additional flavour is given by sometimes being partially flooded as well as by having a tank, therefore some of the drives have to go across the water. The caddies, of course, being very lightly clothed, think nothing of jumping into this water to retrieve the balls; they soon dry themselves in the sun! The Garden Club is devoted to tennis and croquet, and is quite as popular, if not so picturesque, as the others.

The residents of Ceylon are most hospitable; as soon as they know your boat is in, they flock to call, and rival each other in invitations, and entertain you royally. They are not like the insular English at home, who call and say, "I hope we

shall see something of you"; but they arrive and say, "We'll go to the club now, shall we?" and off one starts in rickshaws; or a friend calls at breakfast time and arranges something for you for that day. Naturally, as Ceylon is only about six degrees from the equator, all festivities take place in the evening, as those who can give up the time are invisible during the middle hours of the day.

CHAPTER IV.

THE BURIED CITIES.

A LONG run by rail to Anuradhapura well repays one for the hot, dusty journey, by the glorious scenery one passes through; real jungle in many parts, with palms perhaps rearing their slender stems one hundred feet in the air festooned with creepers, which climb from tree to tree; climbing lilies of varied hues, Bhuddha's trees, shorter, and covered with what at first sight looks like flowers, but which in reality is the underpart of the leaf. The legend is that Buddha, having lost his way in the jungle while out one night (even the gods cannot always find the way home from their club), these trees, by the wind blowing up their leaves, lighted him home, and so were called by his name ever after. Add to these, an undergrowth of ferns, creeping plants, flowering shrubs in a tangle of infinite loveliness, and over all fluttering and hovering myriads of butterflies, large and small, of innumerable colours, the dark rich blues, the mauves and purples, tiny yellow ones, and gay-coloured birds, so that one never finds the ride wearisome with such wealth of nature to watch.

Anuradhapura, for 1,000 years the ancient capital of Ceylon, was a city built in the third century B.C., the buildings all referring to Buddhism. The

account of these old temples has been well preserved by the Cingalese by means of "olas," made from palm leaves, on which the events of ancient times were written. The shrines or temples were called Dagobas, and were always bell-shaped; some enormous, others quite small; some contain enough masonry to build a huge town; they generally end in a queer cupola at the top, and go by the name of dagoba. Round these temples are endless numbers of pillars, many of them leaning at most acute angles, the bases being buried deep in the earth. The Brazen Palace, which contained 1,600 of these pillars, was a large building for the monks of their religion; the soil has in course of time gradually accumulated on the floors of marble of this once magnificent palace. They have a very peculiar effect now, standing nearly all at an angle amongst the jungle. The whole place teems with these peculiar ruins, and doubtless, if more excavations could go on, much would be discovered.

It is very interesting driving about these half-buried places; one sees great baths, almost covered by greenery and overhung by the palms and plantains, monkeys are running happily about, and birds of paradise flit among the smaller trees. In the little streams and ditches, water-tortoises are seen, or else they are sunning themselves on the banks, where no doubt lurk cobras and other kinds of snakes. Fortunately, I did not come across one, though at the hotel I carefully looked under the bed and in the corners for them at night, as the

room was on the ground floor, and opened by three doors on to the garden. I was told by a resident afterwards that I need not have done that; it was much more necessary to look under the *pillow!* Snakes like warmth, and will creep into beds. After that, I always lifted my pillow before going to bed, and if I forgot, I used to wake up half asleep, but too afraid to put my hand under in the dark, for fear of finding one. There is a poisonous snake, which goes by the name of the ticpolonga, and this and the cobra always fight when they meet. The reason is given in the legend that a cobra met a ticpolonga one day in the hot season, when no water was anywhere to be found; but the latter had evidently had a drink, so his friend asked him where he found it. For a long time he would not say, and then only when the cobra promised not to reveal it or injure anyone. "Down the road," said the ticpolonga, "you will find a baby in a bath; but unless you promise not to hurt the baby I won't tell you where it is to be found." On faithfully assenting to this the ticpolonga told the cobra where it was to be found, and off he went, found the baby in the bath, crept up the side, and was putting its head in to drink, when the baby hit out at it. Instantly the cobra reared itself up and bit the child. The ticpolonga's voice was heard behind, "I felt I couldn't trust you, and I was right," so he fell on the cobra, and they fought till the cobra was killed. Ever since then these two snakes repeat ancient history when they meet.

But to go back to the temples. In one of them,

or perhaps I should say at one of them, as there is not much interior left, we saw endless little bits of rags tied on to the trees and pillars. These were the votive offerings of crowds of pilgrims from Burmah, who come at the full moon to worship. Traces of ashes showed where they had had their little charcoal fires for cooking their food. I was rather glad my visit did not coincide with theirs, as these religious pilgrims are apt to be a trifle dirty.

One very interesting bit of native custom I saw by the wayside : a Hindu worshipping in the forest. At the foot of a large tree he had laid a huge banana leaf, and a cocoanut was placed on another green leaf in a kind of bowl, with offerings of rice and grains. By the side a fire was burning, by which I saw a handful of charcoal, and a small boy was sitting watching the blue smoke making fantastic wreaths as it rose up. From the sublime to the ridiculous is not far, and almost immediately after, I was watching another native trying to wash his bullock in a small stream. He was in primeval costume, except for some wonderful things in his ears, and was trying his best to get his animal's face scrubbed. I got as near as I dared with my camera, but the beast was so restive that I did not care to stay for the chance of being soused with water as it rushed out.

The evenings were delightful; the tropical night has infinite charm, the constant singing and chirruping of the insects making every place alive with sound, the huge fireflies dancing up in the air so

Doing "pujah" by the Wayside in Ceylon.

high in the trees that one sometimes wondered if they were stars falling. The day we left Anaradhapura we had an early start, at 7 a.m.; the dew was thick on the ground, although the sun was up. The atmosphere of the carriages was somewhat stuffy, as may be imagined with a temperature of 92 deg. at least. In the very middle of the day, many degrees hotter, from 12 to 4, we had to wait at Polgahawela, which is the junction of the up-trains for Kandy. There was a fair rest-house, to which we walked in blazing sun, and were thankful to sit on the verandah in the shade. We managed to get some slight refreshments, although they expect you to wire in advance; I presume if you do so from a station or two down, they kill a fowl and it is ready when you get there! The fowls you get at dinner were generally running about the compound at lunch time; but if they are buried in the earth for a couple of hours they become tender. Our luggage was left at the station, and by results we found had been in the sun all the time. On our arrival at Kandy the boxes absolutely steamed when opened; the clothes were hot to the touch, and one bag was a mass of black ants; they were thick in it, hopelessly so: we slew thousands, and then had to send it out to be cleaned!

The railway from Polgahawela surpasses itself in beauty as it winds up the lovely Dekanda valley —now curving acutely, again running under the perpendicular side of a mountain a thousand feet above, and having a sheer drop of thousands of feet below. One place is aptly called Sensation Rock.

The view is of mountains rolling in the distance, black with the dense forest of jungle, and below in the plains can be seen the beautiful tender green of the terraced rice-fields, while nearer one notices flowering shrubs and masses of creepers hanging from rock to rock, almost across the deep ravines, where the water comes rushing down in foaming waterfalls. Blue jays were often flying by, glinting their incomparable blue wings in the sunshine. In one part the mountain is 2,500 feet above, and a drop of 1,600 feet down a sheer precipice on the other side testifies to the wonderful engineering skill required for such a line. It is thought so much of, that it is a usual thing for passengers on the mail-boats, waiting for the coaling in Colombo, to come up by train to Kandy, and go back in the day. Such a very exhausting journey led one to expect great things from Kandy, and I was not disappointed; a more beautiful spot could hardly be found nestling in the hollow of the mountains, with its wealth of delights for the eye—the gorgeous riot of vegetation, the colour, the lofty palms, the lake, the grandeur of the scenery, and the ever-mingling variety of natives in their quaint costumes, or, rather, I should say lack of costume, for a comb and a bath towel are often the full dress of the Cingalese. I wonder why a bath towel, particularly if it has a red border and a fringe, should be such a delight; sometimes it is worn as a turban, at others as a skirt!

CHAPTER V.

KANDY.

THE arrival at Kandy was, I must say, very welcome, as we had taken from 7-30 in the morning till 6 p.m. to do 86 miles in a torrid train temperature! The thought of a long night's rest was very alluring; but there was a devil-dance going on near the hotel, and the yells and hoots and tom-toms gave no chance for sleep.

Next morning we made for the temple of the Tooth, thinking a service was held at 9 a.m. This is where Buddha's tooth is carefully preserved, and only shown to the public on the great festival, when it is carried round Kandy in a Perrahera, or procession, with a great deal of ceremony.

The temple is enclosed by a large moat, in which turtles are lazily swimming, or else sunning themselves on the side. Some extraordinary frescoes are painted on the walls of the entrance, showing the torments of the evil-doers in the next world; and it is strange to glance from that to the flower-sellers squatting down round the doorway, with round plates full of heads of flowers ready for votive offerings. The temple flower, the Plumiera, creamy white, jasmine, oleander, marigolds, make the atmosphere sweet with their odour, quite a redeeming

feature in that very smelly place; every worshipper is supposed to bring a flower.

Winding one's way up a steep narrow staircase, whose entrance is guarded by elephant's tusks, one comes to a wonderful door inlaid with ivory and silver; we pass through, and the priests wished to close it behind us, but I protested strongly, having a great objection to being shut in those sacred fanes, the religion of whose worshippers makes them such fanatics, that one is never sure what those priests might do. For all their sanctity, one of their many devils may suddenly prompt them to say to a poor defenceless female, "Your money or your life," more especially when women are counted of no worth there. A curtain was now drawn away, after an interval of waiting, during which some candles were lighted in front of the shrine, which is visible behind massive iron bars. In this place lies the great tooth, an object of devoted reverence to 400 millions of people—stupendous thought! The library is full of interest, having a rare collection of manuscripts written on dried narrow strips of palm leaf boiled and dried. The leaves are fastened together, put between boards in a cover, and are called olas. A priest is in charge, but is too dignified to ask backsheesh for showing his treasures, so the guide thoughtfully suggests it.

The way out from the temple was lined by fearful wrecks of humanity who lie about begging; by their numbers they must find it a profitable occupation. Just beyond the temple there is an Arts and Crafts School, where the natives make brasswork, ear-

rings, embroideries, etc., and one saw them squatting at their work in very primitive shed-like places, sometimes helping their hands by their feet.

The principal drives about Kandy have been named after the wives of governors of Ceylon—Lady Horton's Drive, Lady Anderson's Road, Lady Macarthy's Drive, etc. We went by rickshaw along most of them; how those men will run, in spite of the heat, which they appear to feel as much as white people, for they perspire freely. In one part, a small boy was enlisted to push up hill; he insisted on showing off his English education, which he had had in the schools, but it was very pidgeon English at best; still, he was a very intelligent youngster. If our system of education is not better there than in England, alas for the natives! a smattering of this, a smattering of that, and good at nothing. Many of the roads are completely overhung with tall trees, giving a welcome shelter from the blazing rays of the tropical sun, talipot palms, the highest of all, with wonderful flowers produced once in 100 years, after which the tree suddenly dies, cocoanut palms with clusters of nuts at the top, coffee shrubs, daturas, crotons forming hedges, and all the beautiful plants we call stove-plants in England. Butterflies and birds add their quota of colour to the radiant whole, making them never-to-be-forgotten rides in the lazy lotus land of the mysterious East.

Later in the day we had a gharry, and drove for miles in equally lovely scenery round the lake, along the Wace Road, up hill and down dale, till

we came to the village of Katugastota, where are kept the sacred elephants which take their bath in the evening. About nine of these huge creatures were being washed in the river, thoroughly enjoying themselves. Their coolies were scrubbing them as they lay on their sides, and every now and then they would fill their trunks with water and give themselves a shower bath! How we envied them being in the cool water! When they had finished, their coolies brought some of them up to the bank to speak to us, or, rather, the elephants brought the coolies, some riding on one leg while the animal walked up on three; some little black urchins provided bits of sugar-cane in return for a few cents, and the lordly beasts deigned to take some from our hands with their trunks, and soon tucked them into their mouths.

In our rambles we often saw the Buddhist priests walking about. They are clad in long orange-yellow muslin garments down to their feet, with one arm and shoulder bare; their heads are completely shaven, and they either carry a large dried palm leaf, which is most picturesque, or an ordinary umbrella, to shield their bare heads from the sun. By the way, the umbrella trade in Ceylon must be good, for nearly every native carries an umbrella, and in truth it is needed under such a vertical sun.

That evening we were not satisfied with our day, so took rickshaws again, and went off by the lake to another hotel to see some friends; and really the night was as delightful in its way as the day—stars were shining through the trees, the fireflies

rivalling them in their brightness, the grasshoppers and crickets and nocturnal chirping creatures making a most harmonious sound, and the still and warm air was a joy, increased tenfold by thoughts of January in England!

The next day we went to the Peradeniya Gardens, the Royal Botanic Gardens as they should be designated; they are really a Government department for improvement of agriculture and horticulture; all kinds of instructions are given to the natives for the successful growing of their crops, and prevention of insect pests, blight, etc. The ground covers 150 acres, and is the most charming spot imaginable. The road to it, by driving from Kandy, is about four miles long, full of interest with its weird huts, many closely boarded up by way of door, with a narrow chink through which one often sees eyes peering; presumably there is a way out by the back, but what the atmosphere must be like inside those places defies imagination! Little black babies would be seen playing in the dust by the roadside, dressed—save the mark!—in a necklace of beads round the waist! Here and there would be a gram seller, patiently waiting for customers. Gram is rather similar to dried peas, and is considered a great delicacy, so is sold by weight, the scales for which are very small. Then, of course, the betel nut sellers, with their wares neatly curled up in the large green leaves. Occasionally one sees a beggar, usually some poor maimed creature, often and often blind people being led along by another. The road is for the most

part well shaded by the palms and other trees; but the dust is distinctly objectionable, and if it were not for the delight of watching the natives by the way, one might with far more comfort have gone by train.

The Peradeniya Paradise contains almost every known tropical tree or plant. The red cotton tree is one of the most attractive, as it attains a great height, and is covered in January with masses of dazzling scarlet flowers right up to the top, making a most imposing show. Later in the year the flowers give place to large pods, which, when fully ripe, burst and shower forth their cotton in white balls like snow. There are avenues of palms, of rubbers, of bamboos, pepper trees, cloves, nutmegs, cocoa; in fact, anything that grows anywhere in the tropics all round the world can be found here. It seemed like fairy land to wander round, picking up cloves under one tree, nutmegs with the glorious red mace round them so fresh looking from another, pulling strands of rubber from the stem of the tree where, on being cut, it oozed out; watching the fox-headed bats, or flying foxes, enormous creatures with bodies as large as a rabbit, and whose extended wings reach to four feet, and which, when shot, if only wounded, often show fight, and sharply too, with teeth and claws. In the daytime they hang upside down on the tops of the tallest trees and sleep, except when their slumbers are rudely interrupted by the shrieks and yells of small black boys, who are willing to show you how they fly for a backsheesh of a few cents. Herbaceous borders

glow with colour, only the flowers are hot-house ones—for want of a better name; banks of crotons, too, which also grow wild in the country around. Added to all this beauty another feature is seen in the broad river Mahaweli-Ganga, which almost forms a circle round the gardens. The bamboos grow best near it, making great high clumps, and having such big stems that one can hardly realise they are really only a grass. The rate of bamboo growth is tremendously rapid; in the rains they will grow at the rate of twelve inches a day, and some even declare you can see them growing while you wait! Amongst this exuberance of vegetation one glass-house is seen, and at first one wonders why, when everything is growing out of doors so luxuriantly; but it is, in fact, to protect desert plants from the rich moisture of the place! There are, indeed, conservatories or shade-houses for orchids; these are practically pergolas, the creepers over the tops of the framework doing all that is necessary in providing a welcome screen from the blazing rays of the sun. Groups of natives were sitting round in a circle in one part out for a picnic, and apparently enjoying the place to the full. The drives round are capitally laid out, so that one can—dare I confess such laziness!—be driven slowly about under the shade of the trees by the banks of the river, stopping every now and then when our driver wanted to shew something which he thought specially worth attention. After the usual midday rest we "ricked," shall I call it—otherwise, took rickshaws, not wanting to lose one

minute indoors from that fascinating scenery. Should one enjoy it all as much again, I wonder? Some say one ought never to revisit a place which one has once enjoyed to the full; but, then, it is Nature, and one can never tire of her, even in her plainest northern garb; how much less fear, then, should one have of seeing all her infinite variety and exuberance again here? Certainly, if one has been looking for the Garden of Eden, one must admit it is at Kandy.

That evening we wandered to another temple, up and down shady roads, past the waterfall caused by the overflow of the lake between a gorge, where the natives delight to assemble, sitting under the fall itself, so that the water may cool their dusky forms; or playing in the pool below, where the dhobies may be at work washing linen at the same time! There is a very large market in Kandy, and quantities of vegetables are brought and stacked up in great heaps, besides many different cereals for the Cingalee's fare alone. The English barracks are situated on the side of a hill at the back of the town, in a nice open situation, and the Tommies and the Indian soldiers are well cared for. The town itself is of good size; four or five years ago it had about 25,000 inhabitants, one hundred or so being English, presumably that includes some of the officers, the clergy of the English Church, and possibly some subordinates in different businesses.

CHAPTER VI.

TEA GARDENS AND NUWARA ELIYA.

REGRETFULLY I left Kandy, but only to discover fresh joys on a tea estate in the Hatton district—that railway line also is wonderfully interesting, for its climbing and its scenery, the many turns the train takes gives vistas of perhaps a drop of a thousand feet or so, then a verdant valley, and all up the sides of the hill opposite, as far as eye can see, are the even rows and rows of the tea shrub, the clearness of the atmosphere enabling one to see the shrubs as distinctly as possible.

At Hatton I left the train, and started on a sixteen-mile drive for the bungalow up in the hills. Ceylon road-makers loved zig-zags, sharp curves—anything but a straight line; and this road was a very good specimen. One began to think that the money spent on cutting out the road under the rocks might have gone to make a bridge, which would have solved the difficulty, and shortened the route. Tombstones adorn the road sides at intervals; the first I saw I imagined might have been for someone who had been killed by some accident, but, passing many others, I asked my friend the reason why. It is because the natives like to be buried there, as it is not so lonely by a high road! I should have thought the survivors

would have preferred to have them further away, as they are extremely superstitious, and might be afraid of the "afreets" being about after dark.

It happened to be one of the native holidays, quite a festival, and no tea-pluckers were at work; but in the villages, as we passed, were crowds of people; and in one was a group of devil-dancers, wearing extraordinary masks and skins of animals, making awful musical (?) sounds with various instruments—the tom-tom, of course, not being the least in evidence. At the end of the cart-road, as it is called, a walk of about a mile was the next part of the programme, up the hillside across a purling stream, through the tea plantation, and then the bungalow was reached—a most charming house in a terraced garden full of sweet-smelling flowers, shrubs and trees. One day was spent climbing up into the jungle—perhaps 2,000 feet or so—the home of the elephant, leopard, elk, monkey, "and other wild beasts," as the children say. Unfortunately, they take their rest in the daytime, so we did not see any of the denizens of that primeval forest. Think of sitting out in the shade 6,000 feet up—for in the sun it would be courting sunstroke. What delight it was—the blazing sun—and yet the exhilarating rarefied air; the scrambling over the brushwood, under the trees, along the leafy glades—sometimes so thick that it was almost dark; short cuts here, and shorter ones there, when one came down rather more quickly than one went up, with some of the earth slipping too, all added to the excitement of the moment—

Gathering Tea, Ceylon.

the exploring of the unknown. That night there was a small thunderstorm. It seemed as if we were to see another wonder in the island; the sheet lightning over the hills, towards Adam's Peak, was superb; huge flares illuminating the whole sky came up without the thunder, which passed off soon.

The visit to the tea factory was not the least of the pleasures of that visit. The Tamil coolies gathering the green tips, with the cup-shaped baskets on their backs; the women with saris over their heads, wearing rings in their ears and noses, and anklets and bracelets, make a very effective picture on the hillside. When their baskets are full, they bring them down on their heads to the factory. The plucking, by the way, is as important a feature as any part of the business, as only the tip of the shoots is gathered. When they arrive at the entrance, the baskets are weighed, and the amount is entered in a book. Sometimes a woman carries about fifty pounds quite easily on her head; a helping hand is given her to get it up again, and off she goes to the room, where it is thrown out on to a huge heap, there to be quickly strewn on rows of shelves of hessian (of jute manufacture) in the drying-room, which has to be light, warm and dry. In ordinary days the tea will dry or "wither" in about twenty-two to twenty-four hours; then it is all swept off these shelves, and sent down a shoot to the rolling-machine, usually worked by water-power; then to another machine to be fired, or dried by currents of hot air, from 210 deg. to 218 deg. From this the tea comes out dry and brittle, and

is next put on the sifter, which has three or four grades of sieves—also worked by machinery—by which the tea is sifted into different receptacles at each shelf by means of shoots or spouts. After this, it is ready for packing in lead-lined chests, which are again shaken by machinery, so that the boxes may have every chink and corner filled up with tea. Finally, it is covered with a lead top, soldered down to keep all air out, and then placed on a coolie's head to be marched down to the station, which in this case means a long way. The superintendents have to be very sharp over the coolies, to see there is no leakage of stealing the tea, for instance, and selling it "on their own." It is an interesting life—healthy, full of hard work certainly, and very profitable withal! I should have mentioned seeing the seed-beds in the early morning, higher up on the hill, as tea is started from seeds, not from cuttings. The beds are somewhat similar to our asparagus-beds, and have to be kept constantly watered and shaded. Of water there is generally no scarcity; the streams running down from the mountain tops irrigate the gardens and turn the machinery, as well as supplying the houshold tanks. The climate is very equable, and rain falls oftener than in the low-lying country, so that all vegetation is refreshed.

The journey to Nuwara Eliya is another amazing wonder; the line rises 1,000 feet in six miles, in one place. It is most extraordinary the way it twists and curves; rising so perceptibly that one seems no sooner to have left the station than one is

looking down on to its roof; onwards through a deep and thickly-wooded gorge, and then on to the tea estates. At the bottom of the valley the Nanuoya river tears along, fed by the waterfalls which come rushing and foaming down from the heights, some being crossed by bridges for the train. Nuwara Eliya itself is on a plain, the up-country station so deservedly loved by the dwellers on the sea coast and the low country generally, as the air in that high altitude is most bracing, and gives new life to the jaded and enervated inhabitants, who come there to avoid the hot season, as they call it. I was there in their cold season; but as the thermometer was often at 92 deg. and 94 deg., and as the heat was a damp heat, it felt another 10 deg. hotter, I rather wondered what the "hot season" was like. The small town, as I suppose it would be called, lies at the foot of Pidurutallagalla, which is 8,200 feet; but as Nuwara Eliya is itself 6,000 feet up, a better designation would be to say it lies two-thirds of the way up this mountain! A delightful lake lies almost in the centre of it, and a stream runs through the middle of the valley into it. It is a lively little place; the finest golf links out of Scotland it claims to have—but I have already seen many places with that reputation! Tennis clubs, shooting clubs, fishing clubs, with their usual Oriental festivities—dances many and oft in the season; and as for the race week—it is the aim and object of every individual in Ceylon, I should imagine.

A charming drive leads one for six miles down

a precipitous road to the Hakgalla gardens, which are deservedly famous; but, of course, they are nothing to equal those at Peradeniya. It is very sheltered, having an almost perpendicular peak above it of 1,600 feet or so, and here are grown specimens from tropical and temperate regions from all parts of the world—English flowers side by side with Australian daisies, the oak on friendly terms with the palm! joined, may-be, by a local creeper, which winds up the trees, and whose stem thickens to a great size, and becoming absolutely hard, kills the trees it has honoured with its attentions. From one part of the garden one looks out over the valley to the place where the Boer prisoners were encamped during their sojourn in Ceylon.

The way back to Nuwara Eliya was a slow climb along the winding road, lined with lovely flowers—sweet smelling ones, little blossoms, bigger ones, Arum lilies in any out-of-the-way corner flourishing happily; monkeys taking their siestas in the trees, and no doubt leopards and elk in the thicker forests, in which it is not safe to wander unarmed. What is so absolutely delightful in Ceylon is that, even in the cold season, the trees are never bare of leaves; or, if one or two specimens shed their leaves all at once, amongst such a crowd of others it is not noticed. The foot gharri-wallah, who seemed to hang on to the step of the carriage, gathered me various flowers on the way, proffering them in a gentle manner, as if he really wished to give pleasure, although probably an extra bit of backsheesh was at the back of his mind! The driver's

vocabulary was very limited as to English, which is a great pity, as one loses so much information. It is quite extraordinary how very little English is spoken by these country natives, although it is one of our Crown Colonies.

CHAPTER VII.

COLOMBO AGAIN.

THE journey back from Nuwara Eliya to Colombo was very long and hot—from early morn to dewy eve—but passing through that gorgeous scenery one forgot its wearisome length, and yet there were people who played Bridge nearly all the day! One wondered why they were there at all; Bridge could be played every day at home; but that radiantly lovely scenery was just a day's journey in one's life, and perhaps might never be repeated. Well, their storehouse of memories would be the poorer.

A day on a rubber estate was one of my next experiences. We were to motor out about thirty miles to lunch with some friends, so at 9 a.m. (if we were in England, I should add on one fine morning) we started—a party of three, with a chauffeur who was a Eurasian, and who was confident he knew the way. So he did for about twenty miles, but then we got completely lost. At first the road out of Colombo ran straight enough—one long line under the palms, past the native huts with their usual something lying out in the sun to dry, cocoanut husks or shells, palm leaves, even fish curing, and always babies and children and dogs. Oh! those pi dogs; poor mangy wretches!

Through the cinnamon fields we went, by the fields of the small Palmyra, which will soon grow to a great height. This species of palm produces a kind of sugar; from the reeds flour is obtained; the shells of the fruit make a good sort of fuel; its wood is hard enough for building purposes, or roofing; its leaves thatch their huts, make their fences, their baskets, sleeping mats, and many other things; and the leaves even can be utilised as umbrellas by the Buddhist priest, who having always the head clean-shaven, carries a palm leaf as umbrella. No wonder this Palmyra is cultivated when it can be so profitable, rivalling almost the uses of the banana in the West Indies.

But to go back to the motor. When our chauffeur had become doubtful of the way, he condescended to ask what we should do. My friend knew the country fairly well, and could talk in the vernacular to him, but the Eurasian was so proud of being "English, quite English," that he would not ask his way in Cingalese, replying, when we insisted on his doing so, that they spoke a different dialect, and he could not understand them. He tried a fort place, drove up to a factory, wandered hither and thither, till at last we passed a real Englishman in a cart, who explained to us how to go. Well, we had to turn back, but to do so on that narrow road had to drive nearly two miles or more before we could turn. We certainly saw a good deal of the country by this means, before we got to the rubber plantation itself. Starting on our return early, with the remembrance of our run out there

very present in our minds, we took clear directions what turn to take; but alas! the Eurasian was either wilful or stupid, for he shot round a turn to the left along what he must have seen was only a bullock-cart road, over a flat wooden bridge, which scrunched and crumpled up behind us! As soon as he was over that, he seemed to realise he was on the wrong road. Then came the difficulty again of turning the large car—and of course on coming up to the bridge the unexpected had happened. We had broken the bridge too badly to get the car over. Here was a quandary. Miles away from any white habitations! I had visions of the car either standing there till next day, or sitting in the water between the deep banks if the bridge was attempted. In less time than it takes to write, about sixty or seventy natives appeared, from nowhere it seemed. Such an event did not come their way often; and even babies were brought out to look on. One similarity there is between blacks and whites—a crowd collects just as easily in either hemisphere! At last some of the more intelligent took in what was wanted, and ran off, rather to our dismay, as we had not divined their intentions. But soon they returned with waggling planks torn from somewhere—jungle or house or stack—but such wiggly-waggly ones were no use. So off they went again and brought more, still very slender ones. But it was a case of quantity if quality was not to be had, and these were placed in position, duly inspected by our friend and the chauffeur, and the car was run up to it, then back,

Mending a Bridge, Ceylon.

and finally took it at a rush. We all heaved a sigh of thankfulness when we got it on the right side of that disastrous place. Then we had a sea of hands thrust out as we got into the car, before we had time to look for coins. These Orientals always put out both hands together to receive money, and giving out some large coins, we threw the small ones over their heads, which had the desired effect: they rushed for them and we shot off, the chauffeur making up for lost time by tearing along the corkscrew roads at breakneck speed, only stopping, fortunately in time, when a bullock-waggon got in the way, and then he and our friend had to get down and help to actually shove it on one side. The bullocks are very strong, but very stupid; those for draft-work in Colombo are really fine animals, cream and fawn in colour, with very long horns pointing backwards, large heads, and a hump behind their necks, against which presses the heavy pole laid across their necks. This hump is considered quite a delicacy of food; it is rather like beef's tongue when salted and boiled. I cannot say I liked it; I always seemed to feel my friends were giving me "the hump" when it was served.

Talking of food, housekeepers have a bad time in Colombo and places equally hot. Nothing keeps; the fish you have at dinner has to be bought fresh at five o'clock; all meat, of course, is also fresh killed; but sometimes that and poultry are buried in the earth for a couple of hours, and thus made tender. In some places the food was peculiar; but the safe plan is, when in doubt eat curry—native

cooks can do that, and it is generally very good. Fresh fruit is hardly ever served at dinner at night, only dried kinds; it is considered unwholesome, but is always to be had for breakfast and tiffin. Kitchens are placed outside the bungalows—the cook-house, as it is called—and the native servants have the most primitive things for cooking with—keeping to them by their own wish, as they will not use European pots and pans. Anyway, they certainly produce excellent dinners, whatever they may have to cook them by; but I believe it is wiser not to see the utensils! All the servants—"boys," as they are called—sleep out in the godowns in the compound or garden. Most people have a great number on their staff; one friend, who in England would probably do with six or so, told me he had fifteen men and two "grass ladies." I could not understand where these came in, but it was explained that they cut the grass for the horses! Women servants are not much employed. A tale goes that one lady wanted one as maid, and engaged a nice-looking person with smooth black hair neatly put up in a knot at the back, nice white jacket and skirt; and not for two months after did she find out that the individual was a man! The native women wear a tightly-fitting muslin bodice trimmed with lace, a row of beads round the neck, and generally between the bodice and the skirt appears a narrow brown belt—their own skin! The men seem to polish themselves with cocoanut oil, as their chocolate skins shine, and look as if they were burnished.

But this is a long digression from the end of our motor run. On arriving at the Galle Face Hotel, at six o'clock, we were told that our boxes must be ready in half an hour, as the P. and O. boat, which we had been assured would not sail till next day, was due to start at 8-30. Judge of our dismay! It was a case of hurling our clothes into the trunks, writing farewell notes—one to excuse our absence at a dinner party that night, got up specially for us—paying bills, making arrangements, etc., all on the top of our strenuous day's run, and in a temperature not far from 100 deg. Never shall I forget the absolutely frantic rush we had for that boat and the exhaustion I felt when at last I got to it, just in time, as we thought, seeing the sailing notice up when we were on board: "This boat will sail to-night at 8-30!" Words failed us to express ourselves volubly enough next morning when we awoke in our cabins still in Colombo harbour! It should have been the 1st of April!

Colombo is a very fine town, with plenty of English shops, where residents can get their more pressing needs supplied, and with lots of Indian and Cingalese shops as well. The objectionable habit they have of inviting you inside the native ones—almost pulling you sometimes—takes away somewhat from the pleasures of shopping. The people are very superstitious about everything, and about selling their wares in particular. One day I went into one shop in the evening, and the lamps had just been lighted. I offered the man exactly

half what he asked, and then he muttered something while looking up at the light. I said "What?" He replied: "It's the first offer after the lamp is lighted, so I suppose I must take it!" Said I: "What a pity I didn't offer you ten cents." "I should have to have taken it if you had," said he. And the first offer in the morning they dare not refuse either. They will often hold out a long time, and just as you are leaving the shop will run after you and sell it at your price. But the best way is to go in every day and offer them what price you wish to give, and in about a week you succeed. Time is of no account with these Orientals!

I witnessed rather an important little ceremony one day at the station on my return from up country. I had to wait some time outside the station, with our trunks piled up behind me, and there I made friends with a delightful "chocolate-cream,"—their faces always make me think of chocolate when they had nice white teeth not stained with betel nut—a "boy" from the hotel at Kandy, who had come down to conduct a party up next day. He pointed out a group of Buddhist priests who were waiting, all clad in the orange muslin robes, and having the bare shaved heads. Outside a party was forming—six boys carrying poles, on which was slung a kind of canopy; this was drawn out, a band of tom-toms headed it, frightening horses by the way—but that was a detail, evidently. In the centre, under this canopy, went the chief gentleman, their "archbishop," said my brown

friend; another went in front, carrying a fat parcel rather long in shape, "that was their Bible." I asked Chocolate Cream how he knew about an archbishop, and he said he was a Christian. His people were Buddhists, but he had been to the Missionary Schools. The worst of these converts, I am told, is that you can never get them to understand truth. A lady in charge of a government hospital told me that a lot of native girls go there to be trained, and that if they are Christians they can do no good with them in regard to being truthful; they seem to have no moral sense.

The natives all live together in families. In one Colombo newspaper I read the account that a young girl had died "surrounded by her father and mother, grandfather and grandmother, uncles and aunts." Think of the crowded room and used-up air in that hot climate. One amusing tale I was told *apropos* of a native dying: a master who was away when his servant's wife died, expressed a hope that she did not suffer much. "No, Sahib," he said; "she sat up in bed, gave one big yell, and then mum's the word!"

CHAPTER VIII.

CALCUTTA.

If you want to have a few days of absolute restful delight, bathed in sunshine, take, as we did, a steamer from Colombo to Calcutta. To lie on deck lazily watching the flying-fishes skimming over the sea as smooth as a lake, in a warm and sleepy air, with a good awning over you to protect you from the blazing sun of those tropical seas, is a thorough *dolce far niente*.

The approach to Calcutta up the Hooghli is extremely interesting. Fringes of palm-trees were my first vision of India; but by degrees they became more solid in shape, and lots of craft appeared—B.I. boats, cargo boats, hay and grain on flat rafts, small fishing boats passing up and down, and overhead circled lovely dove-coloured sea-gulls and some large brown kites flapping their huge wings, and then silently poising on them, these kites would drop on to a sea-gull and capture the tit-bit it was carrying off. About four in the afternoon we passed the famous "James and Mary," the sand-bank which has been the scene of many tragedies. It is a dangerous place, named after a vessel that was wrecked there in 1694. The current is always shifting, and if the bow of the boat touches the

Group of Hindus.

bank, the current, which is frightfully strong, swirls it round, so that it touches the opposite side and turns turtle instantly. All the officers march to their stations; the pilot is on the bridge, and his leadsman takes constant soundings, shouting them out in a most melancholy, deep voice. Several vessels have been lost there, so it is only natural that extra precautions should be taken. Of course this passage, needless to say, is only taken in daylight. One lady on board, trying perhaps to "green" me, said she always took care to be dressed at that time; even if she were in bed she got up and put her clothes on. It reminded me of the night when we felt a rather sharp earthquake in England. I got up and went round the house to see if any doors had been burst open or anything thrown down, and coming back to bed I overheard the servants talking at the top of the stairs. To reassure them I said everything was all right, and retired to my bed. Next morning I asked the cook if they had got any more sleep.

"Oh, dear, no m'm," she said; "we didn't go to bed again; we thought if we were to be swallowed up we'd better be dressed." Such an unnecessary trouble, I thought, if they were swallowed up!

But James and Mary having been safely negotiated, we steamed on further up, and anchored for the night near Garden Reach, as traffic is stopped for large steamers after sunset. Next morning came the great excitement of landing in India—that land of one's early dreams and longings—the one place in the world I had made up my mind,

in the "long ago," that I would see. The entrance into Calcutta is a most fitting one for that city of palaces, as they proudly call it. No nasty docks or slums to go through; the vessel draws up to the New "Ghat," you walk through the building, and out on the other side is the great Maidan—the very centre of all things. Some friends met us in their car, and we motored round the "quite green for India" Maidan, along Chowringhee, and appreciated the good impression that such an imposing landing-place gives to a city. It is, as they are fond of saying, full of palaces, modern ones in truth, but handsome and stately buildings—far more graceful than our new buildings in England; a stiff, straight frontage is hardly to be seen.

Chowringhee Gate leads to Fort William, the octagonal fortress finished in 1773, five sides of which command the land, and three the river; it has a dry moat surrounding it, which can be filled, if necessary, from the river by the sluice. It is in admirable condition, and kept up, of course, very well. It is near the centre of everything, being on the edge of the Maidan. And one friend said, in passing by it, "Yes, that's where we shall all have to go if there's a rising"; so it is not kept up only for show, but a good deal of solid earnest is in the background.

Calcutta is an extraordinary place; the modern part is very smart, but one street-length back from the Maidan and Chowringhee you get into the regular native part—thoroughly Oriental, with dirty, queer-looking buildings, and bazaars none

too clean even for an Eastern town. You may walk about there, and feel miles away from civilization. Should one say civilization? Perhaps the natives would not like it; but the queer things one sees—the barber squatting on the kerb to shave his customer's beard; the women carrying their bundles on their heads; two or three men running with a stretcher on their shoulders, on which you may see the muslin-covered corpse, its feet shaking about with the jolting pace of those who are hurrying it off to the burning-ghat by the river. One can't help wondering if it might have been a case of cholera or plague, scattering its germs amongst the crowd, and a crowd there always is in Calcutta. What struck me most was the enormous number of natives walking about—so many more than one sees of that class in England; they all look as if they were on work intent, not loafing about by any means. Perhaps you may see an army of forty brown legs running along under some large thing which seems looming in the air—a closer inspection and you see it is a grand piano being carried on the heads of twenty coolies; or perhaps someone is "moving house," and all the furniture is taken in the same manner. As a rule, it is one package one coolie, unless it is some extra heavy weight; it looks ridiculous to see, perhaps, one with a great chest on his head, and another with only a small box on his. But that is the way with your luggage—one coolie one trunk or package; one coolie one camera. When we left Sealdah Station one day I was immensely amused to see a stack of luggage

on the platform, and a dozen or fourteen coolies squatting round it in a circle—luggage that two porters at most would see to in England.

Considering that we have possessed India as long as we have, it is most extraordinary that English is not understood nor spoken by the gharri-wallahs or drivers, policemen, etc. It is most difficult to make a cabbie understand where to go, and the new taxis are absolutely hopeless—the men don't know the city, and cannot understand you. When you do say a street, it has to be altered in pronunciation before they comprehend. They cannot say two consonants together, so Wood Street has to be called Woody Street, Canning Street Canningy Street, and so on. The gharries are weird things. The first-class ticca gharry is a kind of high victoria, which, having the hood always up to keep off the sun, is a most awkward vehicle to get into; a syce hangs on behind, with a bundle of grass for the horses; and the driver in turban sits on the box; but to get as near as he can to his natural position of squatting, he has to put his bare feet on the dashboard in front. But during my stay in Calcutta an order was promulgated that all gharri-wallahs, *i.e.*, drivers, were to keep their feet on the floor of the box! A prod with your sunshade in his back is the most effective way of arresting his attention, followed up with signs and gesticulations.

The crows are incessant with their raucous cry, and the piercingly shrill call of the eagle or kite, as he makes the crows his jackals, is always in

evidence. I have watched one of these eagles sitting on a high spout on the roof of a house for a long time, silent, with wings folded, hardly a feather moving: he was watching the crows to see if there was anything worth taking a swoop for. Who was it said India wouldn't be India without her crows? And what would happen without them, in a land where sanitary progress is only just making its entry? The Eurasians look what they are—a blot on the landscape; they are increasing in numbers considerably, but in my opinion the races ought not to mix. There is too much nowadays of the levelling up of the blacks and the levelling down of the whites, and the consequence is these Eurasians think themselves as good as the white people. So they may be, in some senses—even superior, sometimes, in intellect. But the fact remains they are coloured, and we should not let that be. One may treat one's black brother with all due respect and sympathy, but white people must keep up the distance between us—a distance of hundreds of generations before their state of civilization will even approach our own, for one point; and even then—"East is East, and West is West, but never the twain shall meet." I saw a funny sight one day in an office in Calcutta: a Eurasian of, we'll say, fourteen annas to the rupee, had a European black coat on, shirt with stiff collar, and cuffs with smart sleeve links, worn over a native white skirt down to his knees and bare feet. That is quite typical of these Eurasians—they are half and half, half black and half English—and good at neither.

There are not many old buildings to go and see in Calcutta; the Jain Temple that is so much thought of did not appeal to me in the least. It is made of mosaic-work, in which bits of coloured glass play a prominent part. There is the temple proper, surrounded by minor buildings and a kind of garden, if you can imagine a stone and mosaic garden, with water running in small channels into a small pool. I wanted to go inside the temple, so a tray with an array of shoes was brought, and Imdad assured me I was obliged to take off my shoes and put these on. I said, "I will put them on over my own," but that wouldn't do. I must take them off—all or nothing. Nothing had it, for I should not ever have been induced to put one of those filthy things on my stockings! So I remained a Peri outside Paradise.

The Calcutta clubs are delightful. The great feature of the Tollygunge one is Sunday breakfast. It is really the Ranelagh of Calcutta, with golf and croquet, charmingly situated a few miles outside the city. Then in the city itself is the Saturday Club, with a huge house—a regular mansion—in a garden, with enormous rooms for bridge-teas, and a perfect ball-room, with long windows or doors all down the sides, and twenty or more electric fans going, so that while dancing one did not feel the heat too much. The great mode of illuminating gardens is by Chinese lanterns; and very pretty they look all strung up in the trees. Of course, there they can be left up and used often; not so at home, where probably it rains in the night and

spoils them all. But the great source of pleasure is the race-course, which they claim as being the best in the world after Ascot, and it is most wonderfully fascinating.

It was really an amusing sight to come on our luggage at Sealdah Station one afternoon when we were starting for a visit to some friends near Calcutta. Piled high up, it looked an enormous quantity, and round it in a circle were about eleven or twelve coolies squatting on their heels, all having been marshalled by Imdad, who had taken it on in advance. I suppose we really had quite a modest amount of luggage, as every one in India takes vast quantities. One's bedding makes an extra bundle; it is absolutely a necessity, for the trains and rest-houses are not provided with any at all. The train compartments are very large, with seats along the sides, instead of across, as in our English railways. These draw out a little for night, and make a wider place to lie on; and one can generally get a reserved compartment. It is very rarely that a European will travel with a native, no matter what his rank; and carriages are actually labelled "Europeans." It is very extraordinary how intense the racial feeling is with the white people the other side Suez. In Europe they may meet, and can be quite friendly, even; but once back in the East, there is a wide line of demarcation, and it is rarely bridged successfully; quite rightly so, too, for it is those who have lived amongst the descendants of mixed colours who can testify to

the highly undesirable results. It is really the disintegration of India.

The excitement of all natives when the train comes in is amusing. One would think they would get used to it, but they are just like children—most excitable, fond of a fuss about nothing. To put luggage in the vans in a stated way, as English porters do, would be impossible; each must talk at once at the top of his voice. At one station we saw an interesting purdah lady arriving. A high long-shaped box, more like a huge coffin on a bier than any thing else—the usual kind of dandy for these people—made of wood with sliding doors, and the floor, shall one say for want of a better word, or seat of hemp-straps contained the lady, who must have squatted on the very uncomfortable seat. It was brought as close up to the compartment as possible, flopped on the ground, and the attendants took a large shawl or curtain, the "purdah," and held it closely from the roof of the palanquin to the carriage door, and we had a fleeting vision of an Indian lady skipping up the steps, when the door was promptly closed. Where any air gets into these palanquins, except from the bottom between the strapped seat, I failed to see, for I went to have a look at it. The traveller would be free from dust, but the heat would be intolerable; and what the motion would be like is too fearful to imagine. I have seen these chests or boxes or palanquins being trundled along on the native's shoulders, till they looked as if they might bump over at any moment. The Purdah system is getting much

Drawing Water, Delhi.

lessened, but there are still many families who are greatly secluded, and whose women never mix with the men in society. I heard of a very large party being given in Calcutta by a Ranee, quite a hen party! The wife of the Lord-Lieutenant and the Court circle being present, one English lady was sprinkled with a spray of scent, a mark of honour, but one at which she was highly indignant, as she was afraid it would spoil her pearls!

Some miles from Calcutta we stayed at a delightful bungalow, standing in a huge garden on the banks of the Hooghli, with lovely flowers, huge trees all round, endless variety of birds—the coppersmith with his extraordinary note just like the beating of metal, the little butcher bird, tiny owls, and the brain-fever bird, just then beginning his irritating call. The jackals in the compound at night certainly gave one "the creeps"; one creature had actually walked into the drawing-room from the verandah! Occasionally they venture near people, because I heard of one getting into the tents of the people at the Durbar—it was said to be mad—and one lady woke up and saw it near her little child, and cried out, "Oh, don't hurt my baby!" when history said it quietly retired. The same one probably visited another tent, where there was an officer, who may possibly have thrown something at it, when it attacked him and bit him on the cheek, and he had to go to the Pasteur hospital instead of seeing the Durbar. Moral: Politely ask jackals to retire when they obtrude

their presence on undesirable occasions. There is a saying that the jackals answer each other from Calcutta to Delhi.

A charming river picnic was given for us in a steam launch up the Hooghli to Bandel, past Chandernagore, the French settlement. We landed in what looked a most unsafe raft of a boat, where you had to squat like the natives on the flat part; but we all got on to it, somehow, and safely to shore, where we explored what seemed a deserted village, with a large Roman Catholic Church standing in an old garden, with quaint cloisters all round. It was originally an old Portuguese monastery and church, which were destroyed by Shan Jehan and rebuilt by a sailor, who during a wreck vowed to found a church if saved. The mast of his vessel is still preserved there. The garden was full of flowers and orange trees laden with blossoms, making the air heavy with their perfume. It lay only a short distance up from the river, and was a very large building to be in so deserted a place, only a few small habitations near. I call them that, as one doesn't know whether to say houses, huts, or hovels!

The return journey after tea was partly in the dark, with a glorious full moon rising above the palm trees. If the getting from the launch to the raft-boat in the early afternoon had been perilous, to get on to one in the dark was rather more so; but we negotiated it all right, and were lighted up the garden path from the landing-stage with large lanterns to avoid treading on possible snakes.

An amusing incident happened that evening. One of us lost a bunch of keys, and the whole party assembled in the bedroom trying each other's to see if they were of any use, when the ayah glided silently into the room on her bare feet, walked slowly up to the bed, raised the mosquito net, put her hand under the pillow, and produced the keys! It was quite a dramatic moment. Under the pillow is apparently the recognised place for native servants to put anything that is lost, and later on we found Imdad placed there a watch left lying about. What the safety of that particular spot can be, I don't know, when it seems to be the regular hiding-place, only perhaps there is a code of honour among them that, if anything is put under the pillow, it has been put there by one of themselves, and so left in safety. One instance I had, while staying at this place, of the alertness of the natives. Our bearer had been left in Calcutta, and we wanted to tell him about an unavoidable change of train by which he was to meet us. So Tulsi, our friend's head bearer, was deputed to find him. To us it seemed rather like looking for a needle in a haystack, but by giving Tulsi the description of his nationality and his name, by dint of enquiries, possibly, from the hotel servants he was duly found, and the message given him. That is where what I call the absolute uncanny power comes in which these blacks have of finding out things. It really seemed marvellous how, out of the whole of Calcutta, Tulsi found out the bearer, who was not even a Calcutta man; but

Tulsi had been with our friends for years, and what he didn't know wasn't, as the Americans say, "worth pickling." He was a typical Indian servant, with his solemn, grave face, spotless turban, tunic, brown bare legs and feet, and respectful mien. "When they are good, they are very, very good, and when they are not, they are——." Our man, Imdad Ali, was quite a good specimen. His English was peculiar, as I remarked before. On paying him his account for registering the baggage the first time, he kept on saying, "Sealdah station one and a half man, Ranighat, one and a half man." I could not understand, and said, "But what do you mean; you couldn't have one and a half coolies," thinking he meant we two had three coolies between us for a box. At last I found he meant the maund weight, by which luggage is charged. At one hotel, when he had retired to rest—I can't say gone to bed—before we had, we found him asleep outside our rooms on his rug or mat, with a wonderful silver case by his side, rather like a cigar case, holding probably some of the things they chew.

CHAPTER IX.

THE INDIAN RIFLE FACTORY.

DURING our stay in Ishapore, we were privileged to see the whole of the rifle factory there—the equivalent of our English Enfield. This most interesting place shews to what a pitch the intelligence of the native can be trained by patience and perseverance—patience almost equal to that of Orientals. It is an enormous factory, employing at times nearly 1,000 natives, who all live in the lines with their families in the most approved military style. All the entrances are guarded by sentries, and the workshops are walled in; and on one side is a very cute substitute for a moat—a thick hedge of prickly cactus. Woe betide anyone who slipped off the wall on to that! There are about 135 component parts in a rifle, and each one is made in the factory, as well as are most of the tools used in the making. The smithy is one of the largest drop-forging shops in India. The other buildings are large and airy, and the drainage system is particularly good, so it is possible to get about almost dry-shod, even after the heaviest rains: over twelve inches has on one occasion fallen in a night, and 2·25 inches in half an hour—on neither occasion was flooding experienced.

The shops, as a rule, run practically east and west, allowing the maximum amount of prevailing southerly breeze in the hot weather and rains to pass through them, and the minimum amount of sun to enter them during the hot season. At that time, when the sun is overhead, it only comes in at the end windows in the morning and evening. The factory is driven electrically, group-driving being adopted, as the machines are too small for separate driving. Electric-driving was adopted on account of its allowing of wide extension of the shops, which tends to coolness. At first underground cells were used, but with the discovery of efficient lightning-arrestors, overhead wires have lately been substituted, and though Ishapore and the surrounding district is subject to particularly severe thunderstorms, no trouble has been experienced. The above account gives one an idea of the difficulty of planning factories, etc., in hot climates, where rains, sun, thunder and lightning—in fact, all the forces of nature—have to be reckoned with far more than in temperate climes. It is marvellous to see the huge machines working fine details, such as getting down to the 1,000th part of an inch, for instance. The wood for the rifles is brought in and stored in one building, being stacked up and turned every now and then to allow of its drying equally. Several men are at work here, and do nothing but turn these pieces of wood day after day, year after year, and yet they are perfectly happy at it! All the parts have to be severely tested, and there is a long shooting-gallery in one

part, where the final tests are made. The gun and shell factory at Cossipore is near, and we were taken over that by the officer in charge, and were lucky to see the steel being poured out in liquid form during our visit. To watch the process of the huge shells being made is a revelation; but it requires a fair amount of will-power to stand the heat of the furnace-shops, added to that of a blazing Indian day! There is much brass used in the manufacture, and as Indians are naturally great people for brass-work, all are searched when they leave the factory, to see that none of the metal in the works is taken. The whole place is well fortressed, and a large number of soldiers are quartered there to keep order; in fact, Ishapore is quite a military centre, as, of course, strict discipline has to be enforced. It is a miniature town; the railway runs right inside to convey the coal and other goods.

CHAPTER X.

SUNRISE ON THE HIMALAYAS.*

SUNRISE on the Himalayas sounds quite simple, but the sight is not quite so easy to attain. To begin with, I left Calcutta in a temperature of 90 deg.; travelling first by train to Damookdea Station on the Ganges, arriving somewhere about 8-30 o'clock. Here the passengers were transferred to a steamer, for a moonlight run up the sacred river for an hour or so to Sara Ghat—having dinner on the top deck, with the monotonous call of the boatmen for music. It is a weird sight to watch the natives at a station. Crowds of them seem to travel at all hours. One sees groups squatting on their heels, generally in a circle, with their bedding rolled up in the middle, waiting with the patience of the Eastern for the next train. What a patience that is! Would that we could acquire it in our hurrying, strenuous twentieth century! I was told the tale of a Khitmutgar, who had asked leave for three days to go and visit his people—the usual excuse—some miles off by train. As he did not return till the fourth day, he was asked the reason why.

"'Please, Sahib, when I got to the station the train done gone, and there wasn't another till next day, so I sat down and waited till it came."

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A Curve in the Darjeeling Railway.

Well, to go back to the fair Sara Ghat—Ghat, by the way, is the generic name for any landing or other place by the water, bathing ghats and burning ghats are often side by side. My black servant Imdad had soon found the reserved carriage and made up the bed, and I settled down for the night's run. Indian railways are not comfortable by night or day: during the hours of sleep one is constantly waking up to hear discussions at every station, and they seem interminable. At Silliguri the small gauge railway is taken for the hills; and here one begins to notice the change in the type of the people from the Indian to the Mongolian: they seem to get a little lighter in colour, and a few more clothes seem to be added at each place stopped at, the further north and the higher we got. Such a quaint little railway this is: a two-foot gauge, with a diminutive engine puffing fussily away, drawing carriages to match, holding four people at most in a compartment, with hardly any windows, but a canvas curtain to let down, if necessary. For a few miles the run is fairly level, crossing the Mahanuddy river by a bridge 700 feet long, and then the rise begins, running along the side of the rocks amid tropical vegetation, under the Sal trees, and palms, tree ferns, and cactus, bananas and Pteris and asparagus ferns, flourishing their fronds almost in at the carriage window, Brugmansia and Poinsettia flowers adding to the beauty of the scene. Then the fun of looping the loop began. Now the train would run round a curve so acute that the engine-driver and guard

could almost shake hands with a pole; then off round a corner in the opposite direction; here backing up an incline, and there shooting forward up another; now running along the head of a precipice; again going through a tunnel of forest. As it follows the line of the old road, it occasionally runs up the middle of it, quite unfenced. Once it was held up suddenly by a bullock-waggon being in the way; and we watched the refractory animals being pushed aside. Another time, a stray buffalo, running in front and refusing to leave the line, added to the many and various delays; and I must not omit one thrilling moment when the train met round a sharp curve another train coming in the opposite direction on the same line! That was an event! Both trains pulled up, luckily, about fifteen yards apart. All the officials of each got down, looked at the trains, looked at each other, and had a long discussion, presumably about who should give way. My friend and I and the only other white passenger got out, and I had plenty of time to take some photographs. The natives eagerly pressed out at the windows to await developments, taking it all with Eastern philosophy. In the end, the other train backed to the last station, and we went ahead.

One wonders what happens in the rains, when sometimes fourteen inches falls in six hours, as part of the railway runs perilously near the edge of the Khud or precipice, with perpendicular mountains on the other side; and one has heard tales of landslides carrying some of the line with it. I

must say I would prefer not to travel by it after a heavy fall of rain. Around some of the bends, one gets magnificent views of the country below; in one spot particularly the mountains on both sides form a V, at the outer points of which the fertile plains of India stretch out to a seemingly limitless horizon down below. On the way there are some fine water-courses to be seen, one especially, called the Pagla Jhora, which is a source of trouble to the road, as it is sometimes a roaring torrent, with the rainfall which comes down from the clouds striking the Mahaldiram range of mountains; another, with a large waterfall having a drop of 150 feet, is the actual source of the Mahanuddy river. At Sonada the line runs through the main street, with the bazaars on both sides, so that you can step out of the train and do a little shopping during some of its halts. A brisk trade is also done with the itinerant merchants of native jewellery and curios. The people have a smattering of English, and ask preposterous prices, which come down as the train moves, and you can generally buy at your own price, as the sellers hurl the articles in, and snatch the money, while the puffing little engine moves quickly off.

As we come up higher, the type of people changes completely and becomes quite Mongolian, with the broad, flat features, short, squat figures, and paler skins than the Hindus. The Bhutians here are much more clothed; the temperature is markedly cooler; and one begins to think of top-coats, and no wonder, when from 400 feet at Siliguri one is

now at 7,407 in fifty-one miles, the highest point reached by the wonderful railway, which cost £3,000 a mile to make, even when making use of the original cart road.

Darjeeling was reached about midday, and, mounting rickshaws, we were soon towed off to the hotel.

But now for the sunrise at 3-30 a.m next morning. Our start was fixed for Tiger Hill, some six miles off, and another 2,000 feet up. As I came down to the front door, I saw outside, in the dark, three dandies on the ground, and six men to each—all ready to start. Imdad Ali packed me into mine, with all the coats and rugs I had with me; much needed they were, for having dropped in temperature 60 deg. in twenty-four hours, and there being a sharp frost into the bargain, one felt it very cold. While we were getting ready, one man came inside on the mat, squatted down, slowly and carefully removed his shoes, placed them across the middle of his back, and tied them round his waist. The costumes of the Jampanis men were varied and marvellous. Some had thick kimono-shaped coats, high cloth boots, and the national Bhutian close-fitting caps, with fur ear-pieces, over which now and then they fasten their pig-tail to keep the caps on! Most had turquoise matrix hung round their neck, or a bracelet; some wore one ear-ring, others two; some had shoes, others were bare-footed. It was a novel experience—three Europeans and these eighteen or twenty coloured men, most ruffian-looking, starting off in the dark but gloriously

starry night, winding up the steep slopes of the hill by narrow paths, precipitous in places, where you could look perpendicularly down on the town below, with its lights twinkling like big stationary fireflies.

The stillness was absolute—you could feel it; the only sound was the tramp, tramp of the Jampanies and their queer grunting noises as they marked time. The dandy is shaped like a canoe, with a seat in it, in which you can sit comfortably wrapped up. This is slung on poles, which the men place on their shoulders. First one was carried backwards; every now and then they would change shoulders; then, with a sudden cry, something like a snarl, I was veered round, and "faced the music." I preferred this, as by chance it so happened I was the "last of the dandies," and every few minutes I wanted to turn round and see if my companions were within earshot, as I was in terror of being left behind in the dark with these wild-looking natives. For six miles we wound up and down—mostly up—round the mountain, down a crevasse; then up again, along a flat bit, up and up; now seeing the moon gleam out from the clouds, anon being enveloped in a thick mist.

After about two hours we arrived at our objective —Tiger Hill, 9,000 feet up, where our dandies were deposited on a very frosty ground, and we stepped out into the thickest of thick mists. This was heart-breaking—to come so far for such a result! I confess I thought my friend, who had decided to stay in her bed, had chosen the better part, and I

thought of the exultant raillery I should get on my return to the hotel, for a more forlorn hope of seeing the event that day could not have been held out. But a little patient waiting, and the reward came. At a shout from the men, we noticed the clouds were dropping. Alas! they rolled up again. Then one corner of the curtain dropped, and Kinchinjunga appeared snow-white in very truth, with a tiny patch of rose at the side, where the first gleams of the morning sun caught it; and even as we watched, the whole bank of clouds slowly sank little by little, till it seemed to close in, shutting out the ground below us; and we were above it, above everything, alone on "the roof of the world," silently gazing with speechless awe on the glory of those white mountain peaks 29,000 feet high, one after the other catching the gorgeous tint of the golden sun-rise, which was gilding and tinging the masses of billowy ether below, till it was all bathed in an ineffably beautiful tint of rose, like the waves of a pink, pink sea. How far away the world seemed, blotted out with all its cares; wrapped in such infinity one was for a short moment half way to Paradise.

Darjeeling itself, the famous hill station, is perched on the side of the mountain; with houses built in some places almost inside the rocks. its streets are almost perpendicular in places! And with its rainfall of 125 inches in the year, one wonders how any soil is ever left on the surface. About a mile below the town is the Bhutia Bustee, the native village of the Bhutians proper, who really

belong to Thibet. These people have a famous Buddhist temple there, with a huge praying-wheel, probably about ten feet high, and very thick—in fact, a regular cylinder. It is turned by a diminutive child, who squats on the ground and pulls a cord, by means of which the enormous wheel turns round, while the child repeats the perpetual words, "om-mani, padmi om."

The bazaar is quite a large one, and as I and my friend were the only white people there that afternoon, we were soon surrounded by a hopeful army of hawkers, in their native dress.

"Buy this, memsahib, buy this. That man no good, memsahib. This one nice, 'sainten rupees,'" which by means of fingers held up we understood was seventeen. "Memsahib, memsahib, buy this ring of Dalai Lama!"

They ask, of course, preposterous prices in the hope of getting it, but are quite ready to come down, even following you quite a long distance, lowering the price by an anna almost with every step. The women wear very magnificent ear-rings—ear-ornaments, I ought to say—of three large turquoise matrix, worked up in silver. For these they wanted thirty rupees (equal to £2), and would not lower more than to twenty-five. Presumably the ornaments form part of their bank, which, as is common with Indians, seems to be carried on their persons. They also wear very finely worked silver chatelaines hung from their shoulders. The people seemed very merry and good-tempered, and laughed heartily when we made them offers for their goods.

CHAPTER XI.

SAM SING.

FROM Siliguri it was not a long journey to Chelsa station, and from there a long drive of many miles, and rising 1,200 feet, brought me to my destination —one of the most charming bungalows in the Dooars, with a compound, a veritable Eden—probably with a serpent or two in it, tropical flowers and palms, mango-trees, orange-trees, lychees and peaches; hibiscus with its scarlet blossoms, bougainvilleas simply rioting with colour, "bail" trees with their huge green balls of fruit, rubber-trees and crotons like little trees, Poinsettias waving on the breeze, sixteen to eighteen feet high—how puny my little treasured ones looked in the greenhouse when I came back! How beautiful it was that day in early February, sitting on the edge of the Khud, with a sheer drop of 300 feet below, where, murmuring over the stones like a gentle lullaby, the river was bringing its grey-blue waters down from the eternal snows. On the other side sprang up almost perpendicularly the Himalayas, and one could contemplate how that glorious panorama had been there for man's eyes to look upon since the creation of the world—those stately peaks, across whose summits the clouds were throwing blue shadows—one felt one could become a Buddhist, if

"An Awkward Meeting."
(Two trains on the same line, Darjeeling Railway.)

contemplation of life and its beauty comprised all its tenets. One could sit there for hours absorbing the lovely scenery, listening to the drowsy hum of the insects, the calls of the blue jays and the green parakeets, which were flitting from tree to tree, watching the tender lights and shades on the mountain side, the allamanda flowers on one side and the hibiscus on the other, giving the scented air still more joys; even the huge ants on the rail at the edge of the precipice seemed placid that morning, and not in the hurry ants usually appear to be in.

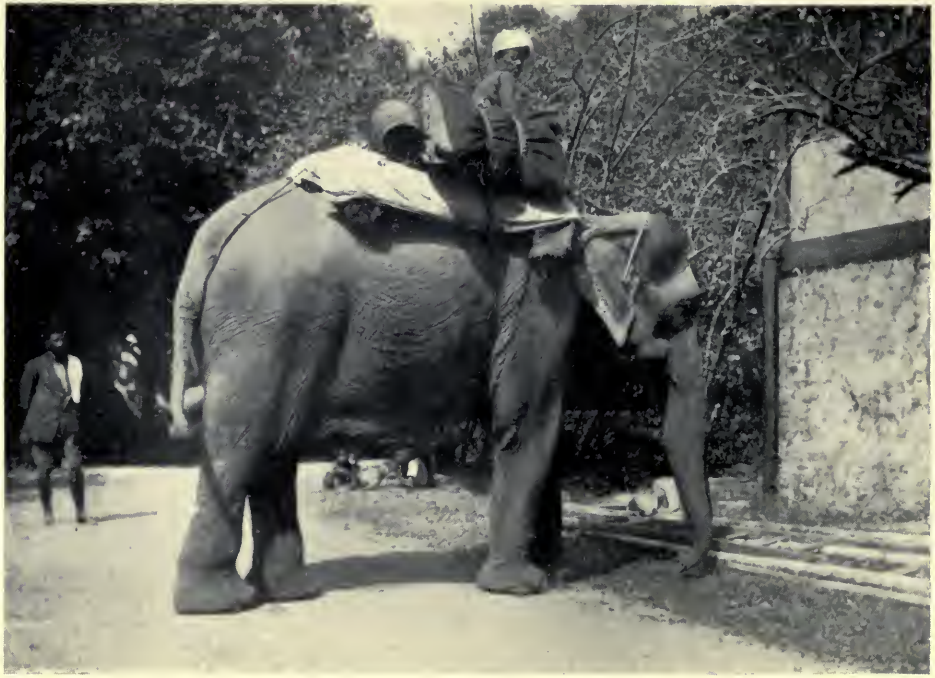
And yet that fair scene had had its horrors in the way of calamities: deadly cholera had once decimated the villages by that river, and plague had had its toll. But all was peace that morning, all nature was rejoicing in the warmth of the sun; and if a leopard or tiger were lurking in the scrub down the side of the cliff, he was sleeping in the noonday heat, and not appearing to disturb one's *dolce far niente*. For such beasts were quite near; one man going home from playing tennis with us, saw a leopard by the road, and not long afterwards they were sitting in a machan watching for a huge tiger, only a few hundred yards away, one night. One very wonderful story I was told, which at first I would not believe, thinking that, as "a tenderfoot," I was being "drawn," till I was assured by others it was a fact. Our friend, hearing a noise outside his bedroom window, took up his gun, thinking perhaps a wild beast had got to his cow. He looked out, saw bright spots, and shot, when a leopard

was found dead on the ground. This tale made me quite nervy, as bungalows always have only ground floors. I felt that night that a leopard might be scratching at my windows and doors, and I will confess I shut up all of them, enduring the heat rather than the idea of nocturnal visitors. It certainly added a spice of excitement to a drive back from the club, in the dark, after the polo matches, when one thinks a wild beast may dart out from the bushes. That they do so the following paragraph from the Calcutta daily paper of January 13th, 1913, will show:—

"At Nowgong it was related how a lady and gentleman and child were driving in a buggy to Rampur Station in the evening, when a tiger sprang out of the jungle on the pony's neck, and began to tear it to bits and devour it. The occupants took refuge in a coolie's cottage."

In the compound the native women used to work, weeding and watering. They would bring their piccaninnies with them—funny little black things—and if you happened to be walking through the compound, you might come upon a little bundle on the grass, with a baby lying asleep on it; or a tiny one in a basket slung across its mother's neck, in no way disturbed by the position she might be in.

While I was staying here, we went one day for a ride on an elephant, "Luchmunia" by name, which was sent up for us, decorated with his caste mark in a huge white circle, and spot on the forehead. I had ridden several things before—not only



Ready for the Start. Sam Sing.

my hobbies—but this was the first time I had tried an elephant, and I seemed so very high up, and without a howdah, although its back was broad, the pad did not seem very safe; but by clinging on to the ropes with both hands, and with a friendly arm in mine for the first mile or so, I got used to the motion, and felt quite happy. Although so huge, elephants are timid creatures—a hare running across their path very much upsets them. Whether they share the superstition of the English or not, I don't know, but at home it is considered very unlucky for a hare to run across the road in front of anyone driving.

Luchmunia took us along the road beneath the glorious avenue of bamboos, which, growing on both sides, make a perfect tunnel and a welcome shade from the hot sun; and it was apparent that so large an animal was a novelty up there, for all the black kiddies turned out to see it, and great was the excitement. It had been stalled the night before on an open space near the Khud, tethered to a tree, and then it went away later with a visitor's luggage on its back, as well as the mahout and his tin pail—at which I laughed heartily; but I laughed no longer in derision when I was glad enough to travel across India in the middle of March (and Anglo-Indians know what that means) with a similar article. I braved all criticism, gave the bearer the tin pail to put in my compartment, and then I filled it with ice and packed Perrier water in it—a most delightful arrangement—as the ice-box in the train, if any, is not big enough to hold much.

The jungle in this district was primeval; to walk in it for miles and feel that it was untouched since the Creation was a wonderful experience. Whole generations of trees had been growing there, each seeding the next; the boulders covered with moss and soil; the creepers, large and small, winding their arms round the trunks; the call of the birds, and the flutter of green wings; and the extraordinary feeling that everything was alive all round you, and yet you could not see all—the hidden treasures of the animal and vegetable worlds were not to be given up to man too lightly. Under one tree I saw traces of a pujah: there was a little empty space, and here lay a pile of feathers, true trace of a fowl killing for sacrifice because of a devil in the tree! The Hindu, when he wants to propitiate a devil, takes a cock—begs, borrows, or steals it, no doubt—and kills it with great incantations under the tree where the demon is supposed to live. However, the carcase is usually brought away to be eaten, one finds! The hornbills, enormous birds, were flying about here; they always go in pairs.

The journey from here to Calcutta was very varied. First, the long drive to Chelsa station, down the 1,200 feet, going merrily along in the tum-tum, with a change of horses half-way down, along roads wide and narrow, good, bad and indifferent; now going under bamboos, gold mohurs; now through a native bhusti; again on the edge of a Khud, where, if a false step had been made by the horse, one would have seen what

Mother Earth tasted like in India! A very laughable scene occurred. A babu was riding past us very quickly; my friend was greatly enraged because, until quite recently, no native was allowed to pass a sahib on his pony—he must get down to shew respect. Well, this one had none, and he must have tried to show his superiority by breaking into a gallop as he passed; but retribution soon followed, the pony took to his heels and fled. The babu stuck on for a time, and then descended to the earth, where he lay moaning and crying out to us to help him. "Serve you jolly well right," said my friend as we drove by.

I could not resist turning round to see what happened, and behold the native getting himself together and coming along quite happily! The pony, in the meantime, had stopped near the station. Well, when the train came up, I proceeded on the second stage of the journey, about three hours by train through rather interesting jungle and plains. It is not a very much used line, as you may imagine when I say that a Captain L——, who was in the carriage with me, arranged with the guard to stop the train at a certain point, while he and his babu got out to measure a piece of land for a camp for the regiment!

At another place we stopped for tiffin, served in the station room, the usual horrible food that one gets when travelling in India.

At the end of the three hours came a river passage, so we alighted at the top of the bank and got into a boat, a kind of huge punt with a cover,

fortunately, to keep off the sun. This was punted across the Teesta by a few natives with very long bamboo poles, following the current in some places, as the water was low and the bed of the river very treacherous. At the other side, where the water ended, was the rest of the river-bed—a mile and a quarter of dry sand—over which rails are laid when the river goes down in the dry weather. On these rails run trolleys holding three or four people, and pushed by two blacks, who run along the rails, placing their feet most accurately one in front of the other without ever slipping. We went like a switchback till we arrived at a little backwater, over which was a slight narrow bamboo bridge, which quivered as one walked on it, and was so wide between the reeds of the bamboos that one's heels slipped through. Coming at last to the real bank of the river, I was given a lift in a tum-tum to the club at Jalpaiguri, where one had to wait a few hours for the night train to Calcutta. This club is a great centre; with tennis courts, rose gardens, large hall for dances, billiard and bridge rooms; for English people in India are very sociable, and allow ladies in their clubs, and treat them well, too; not like an English tennis club I know in "a back of beyond" provincial town, where I one day found the men sitting at one table and the ladies at another for their tea! It really seemed that one might be a militant suffragette if one were not considered fit to sit at meals with "the lords of creation." But to hark back to the more genial surroundings of Jalpaiguri. It is a nice little village, should I

Native Ferry, Teesta River, Dooars.

say, or perhaps "station" is the more correct term; lots of Europeans live there in civil and military capacities.

Having sampled an excellent dinner at the club, I was motored by the Commissioner to the station for the night mail. On this journey, about midnight, I heard a tremendous commotion going on at one station, so I got up to see what it was all about. It was only a sort of pilgrimage; hundreds, I might say a thousand or so, of natives were all clamouring on the platform getting into a train. It may sound rather absurd when I said such a number "getting into *a* train," but as they pack themselves as tightly as sardines in a box, one compartment can hold a good number; some hang half out of the window, but all seem perfectly happy at being crushed up. Natives love travelling; one never sees so many of their class in England going about; but in the East the stations are full of them. They must do it for pleasure, but it is a queer kind of pleasure, quite beyond the Western's comprehension.

Five o'clock a.m. found us at the banks of the Ganges, which we had to cross in a ferry steamer, so down the banks I trudged, along the sand, and on to the boat, to find breakfast laid on the upper deck in the open air. Having despatched Chota Hazri with a keen appetite at that weird hour, I sat and watched the dawn rise over the sacred river. How strange it was! There was the sun and the river, both of which had been there since the Creation—and a boat full of "passers by" in the

world. One thought of the countless times the sun had looked on that sacred river, what scenes it had watched, how many generations of people. I wonder what the first boat on it was like. The cry of the leadsmen was melancholy and frequent, for the shifting bed alters the current and makes navigation difficult. This year the water had gone much lower down than when I was there before, so a longer walk was needed over the sands to the train when we arrived at the other side.

Such a motley crowd got in: some women quite purdah, with enormous covers all over them; others decked in all their jewellery; some with bundles meekly walking after the husband; children with wondering eyes; old, old women bent with age, leaning on bamboo staves, hurrying hither and thither. Little groups breakfasting off cakes and pastries, eaten whilst sitting in a circle, were watched hungrily by the miserable pi dogs, which always come to meet or start a train, in the hopes of finding some scrap to eat. How I longed to shoot each poor creature I saw, and yet I suppose they are useful where jackals are not; but there are so many more of them than there need be, and they look so horrible and starving. There was quite a long wait here, getting everybody and their luggage on, but at last we started, and about 10-30 arrived in Calcutta, I having sampled on this journey tum-tums, punt-boat, train, trolley, motor-car, and steamer, so that in no possible way could the journey be said to be wanting in variety during the twenty-four hours.

Indian trains are fairly comfortable; they are large and wide, and as airy as they can be in that climate. Plenty of luggage can be stored away in the compartment. It is wonderful what an amount of things one does travel with in India; cool nights must be prepared for, and even if wearing a muslin dress in the day, rugs are wanted after sunset, so "thick and thin" clothes have to be provided; then your tiffin basket, your bedding roll, your hat box, suit case, and perhaps even a cabin-trunk are all put inside.

CHAPTER XII.

INDIAN CUSTOMS.

A DRIVE out from Calcutta reveals many interesting sights: the tall natives coming into the city carrying huge trusses of doug, the native grass (so nourishing for horses), on their heads; here and there tall cocoanut-palms with the fruit hanging in clusters; the toddy palm, tapped right up at the top with a jar tied to it to catch the sap, which is made into a spirit called arrack; native houses of palm leaves and sticks—for they really look nothing more—near which are seen groups of natives squatting round an evening meal, cooking in a pot over a few bits of dung-cake, which they burn as fuel, and which the women earlier in the day may have made, by collecting the material and plastering it on the side of bricks or stone building, or putting out in the sun to dry and bake; children with rings in their noses and ears, running along; pariah dogs snuffing over a rubbish heap, hoping to find something to eat; cows tethered here and there; a goat with some kids; birds—minars and blue jays—flitting about; fields or patches of mustard, and peas looking very green. Now we pass a paddy mill, where "country-made" rice can be bought; the paddy, looking light brown in colour, is sent out of a furnace and spread out on

a flat open space to dry in the sun, then at evening it is swept up, by women and children, into heaps.

I often thought I should like to be able to disguise myself and go and sit amongst the natives and hear what they talk about, and see what is in their minds; but that white people will never achieve. *They* know everything that goes on in some occult way, and for that reason a disguised person would soon be found out. To watch them from a train just at dusk, passing one after another to their huts, with the fires burning outside, and a circle sitting round—what can they be discussing? They are human as we are; they have their passions, their loves and hates, as we have; and yet there is such a gulf between us, that they might be inhabitants of another planet for all we know, or ever shall know, of them.

Indians are very partial to sweets, and whenever you visit them at their houses, all sorts of wonderful things are seen: little round balls, quite white, are very popular, and cakes made of all sweet things, too. It is a very delightful sight to see a gathering of these high caste Indians in their homes. The women's saris are most exquisite, lovely pale colours, pearly mauves, roseate pinks, all embroidered round the edge; and most gorgeous jewels are worn, great bunches of pearls for ear-rings, wonderful clasps for fastening up the drapery, priceless necklaces—one of opals made me most envious. Some of the women are getting much more independent than of old. To my amazement one day at a tennis party at one of the Indian

Judge's, I played tennis against an Indian lady who was dressed in native costume—sari and all. I was greatly surprised to find how well she could play, never running much, but somehow taking all her balls. Talking of tennis, it is played in a very luxurious way in India. There is always a chokra, *i.e.*, a small boy, behind each player to pick up the balls. Generally, the chokra is dressed in a uniform—khaki-coloured coat and trousers, perhaps, with red turban. Tennis courts are always most carefully watered every day. Some are actually flooded three times a week. But the grass is not the turf of England, being a kind called doug, which simply runs over the surface. Many people prefer to play on pukka, *i.e.*, brick rubble courts. The malis, who are the gardeners, are mostly very successful with their flowers, and, as a rule, they are wonderfully clever in arranging them for the table. The mali is one of the important servants in an Indian household; he sometimes lives in a little go-down near the entrance gates, and so knows when anyone comes or goes.

On Christmas morning the mali was at the foot of the stairs waiting for everyone, with a tasteful little button-hole on a silver salver, which he offered to each with deep salaams; also when any of the family go away he is there with a button-hole; in the country where there are plenty of flowers he provides one every day. The head mali also brings in the vegetables from the garden, and ranges them for the Mem-Sahib's inspection before the Bawachee has them. Bawachee is the cook; he may be a

"Mug" or a Goanese—always one of a race of cooks who have their own recipes handed down from father to son. They are very clever in every way in making excellent dishes and in managing the prices for the Mem-Sahib, so that a certain percentage of the marketing goes into their own pockets! They are very ambitious, and send up the menu for dinner in French. Here is a sample (*sic*) at my friend's house one day:—

Potage: Puree de Cokleckie.
Poisson: Mayonnaise de Beckty a la Andruse.
Entrees: Fillet de Bouif ala chumpiganons.
Relves: Dindon Roti Jambon York.
Rot: Pati di foigras spic.
Entermets: Gatoes de Ratafiah ala Chantilly.
Severye: Pranishon de Italian.
Glace: Creme ala Japanis.

Another menu, not quite so ambitious, was (*sic*):

Purity Cortofoe.
Bhecti moynice supreme.
Mutton cutlet a la repoy.
Dandi and Jambon.
Aspergus nues.
Plum Pudding.
Cheese biscuits.
Pine apple ice.

The Bawachees ought to be very rich, as they have so many extras; the price is always a few pice more than what one should pay, and coolie hire figures largely in his accounts, as of course he could not possibly carry his wares back from the bazaar himself!

There is usually a war going on between the Khitmutghar and the Bawachee, but the Kamsamah is supposed to keep the peace among them all. The servant question, the great crux in many English households, is much simplified out in the East. You get your servants and pay them so much a month, and they feed themselves (except what they rob from you), and sleep out in the little go-downs in the compounds, so that no bedroom accommodation nor servants' hall menu has to be considered. Of course there is a difficulty in needing so many, as the man who sweeps the floor may not clean the silver, nor the one who carries the water—the Bheesti—cook the food. The coachman sees to the carriage only; the horse has to have its own particular syce; and that didn't seem all, for at one house where my window had a glimpse of the stables, there seemed to be a saddle cleaner and harness polisher, and someone else to hold the polish! It is very rarely that you find a female servant in any house in India, unless there are children, when an ayah is all-important. Ayahs manage the young ones well, being very fond of children. Another servant to be much considered is the Dhobi, or washerman. In towns he is very trying, but in the country, where a family can have one, or where one or two houses can share one, he is passable. He always delights in banging your clothes on stones, and putting his own ink-mark in prominent places on your already correctly marked linen; in tearing all buttons off; in putting every possible iron-mould he can; and, on some,

leaving traces of betel-nut juice. At one friend's, up in the hills, a fine tale went round the clubs while I was there, of the Dhobi who went to one of the bachelors and asked how he was to wash certain of our "neathies." "I cannot iron them, Sahib; I cannot starch them—they are all lace." Why he should have appealed to the Sahib, we could not imagine.

Dhobis are quite happy as long as they can wash in a public tank, *i.e.*, a pond where the buffaloes are scrubbed, and the bullock-carts, and even the natives themselves. The Dhobi day is always an anxious one for the mem-sahib or her maid, for each article has to be enumerated before the lord of the washtub, or it never comes back; sometimes the Dhobi squats on the ground and touches the things as they are thrown at him. The clothes are then kicked into a sheet and fastened up into a peculiar shaped bundle—the Dhobi's bundle can never be mistaken—and either put on his shoulder, or on the back of his donkey. So lowly are Dhobis thought of that even "the Dhobi's donkey" becomes a saying: "Am I the Dhobi's donkey, that such-and-such should be done to me!"

Another institution in many houses is the Dirzi or tailor, who comes and squats on the verandah all day, with his machine on the floor in front of him. He will do all sorts of things, from mending to making. Dresses, suits, chair-covers or cushions, are all the same to him. He has a tiresome way of wanting buttons or tapes at inconvenient times, and of pretending that he cannot

get on without them. The verandah, in an Indian home, is the centre of everything. You can have your meals there; you can take your siesta, after tiffin, in a long chair—those special Eastern luxuries that so many old Anglo-Indians regret when they get back to the old country, because most houses over here are too small for them! Then the verandah is the great meeting place for a rubber of bridge between tea and dinner. At other times you interview the different wallahs there—the Chikan-wallah, with his embroideries, who arrives with an enormous bundle, which is gravely and silently deposited on the floor; down goes the man, too, unties the ends, and shows all his wares. The Kashmiri wallah, who is most ambitious, and brings one or two men with large boxes, desiring to display the contents of each. "See, Lady Sahib, this work; how fine, how beautiful the colours." "It takes a man six months to work this"—in fact, any and every man who can sell anything will be quite content to sit for a couple of hours or so displaying all his wares. They are very inquisitive about each other, one man saying to me: "Did the mem-sahib buy anything from the Kashmiri man the other day?" If you happen to be engaged, they simply sit on the doorsteps or in the compound for an hour or two—what matter! there is no hurry. I suppose the house-bearers get a backsheesh for allowing them to be announced—the natives always work each other for a few pence. One man told me he could never get a ticcagharri when he sent out for one, and could

not understand why, until the durwan—or door-keeper—left, when he found that the latter wanted so much backsheesh each time he called a gharri that at last they all refused to come. The native servants all think much of the children, particularly of little boys, the "chota sahib," and love to take charge of them; girl babies they tolerate, but of course do not consider them of so much importance. Some of the servants can speak English. Here is a sample letter sent to a sahib by his servant while he was away on leave, referring to an old goat he was looking after, the letter being most probably written in the street by a babu:—

"RESPECTED SIR,

"With great salaams to your kindness and Madam Sahib and others I am very much obliged to you for receiving the sum of Rs.10. I am sorry to inform you that Sarji died of long weakness though it is fed at home for 11 months. We are all doing well and hope you all do the same. This year the crops failed away whereby a great famine is raging this side and it is even felt to me very much. I am poor and helpless and my livelihood up to this time depends upon your kindness. You were kind to me and you are kind to me and I hope you will be kind to me, poor as I am, henceforth as possible as you can. Your obligations upon me are too much to be returned by me. Nothing particular more for the present.

"I beg to remain, etc."

This, too, is an amusing sample of the babu literature :—

"SIR,

"We the grieved and needy office members of ——— and ——— beg humbly to bring to your kind notice the following few lines of our grievances and discontentment for favor of consideration. We beg to state we are made to work in the office for 90 per cent. Sundays and gazetted holidays, besides this we are liable to work in the office from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. and very often from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. i.e. for 10 and 11 hours, not for a day only or for a week only or for a month only but for years continuously on the projects of canals, etc. etc. Sir, this overworking has made our eyesight very poor, has made us sickly. We cannot see our relations and sick friends, we have to leave them on mercy of God. We shall pray for your long life and prosperity. A word to the wise is sufficient."

I think the allusion to the fact that they cannot see their people, so have to leave them to the mercy of Allah, is very good; evidently they do not think much of that! The people are absurdly superstitious, as this report, taken from an Indian daily paper, will show :—

"An interesting tale of deception, alleged to have been practised by a Yogi from Mount Abu, was told by a Parsi before the Fourth Presidency Magistrate of Bombay, when the

Bhutians at Darjeeling.

police charged a Hindu with cheating a Parsi priest in respect of Rs.3,624. The priest saw an advertisement in a local paper, which stated that a Yogi could foretell events. The priest called on the Yogi and paid Rs.2 to have his palm read. Complainant was told that if he brought some money for the Yogi he would get in a short time a new wife, eight lakhs of rupees, and a carriage and pair to drive in, provided he did not mention his prospects to anybody before they were realised, or the effect of magic would fail. Lured by such bright prospects of becoming rich, the credulous Parsi continued to visit accused, and every time took with him sums of money with presents, consisting of articles of furniture and silverware. Fearing failure of the effect of the magic, the deluded priest refrained from telling anyone what he was doing. Dreaming of a beautiful wife, and a carriage and pair to drive in with her, he devised means of providing the Yogi with funds, and eventually sold all his bonds and shares in public companies, and thus gave to accused in all Rs.3,624. When all his funds had been exhausted, and he could not give more, he believed he had been duped, and as he found himself penniless he went to Inspector Sykes, who arrested the accused."

But what is more astonishing is that educated Indians are so extraordinarily credulous. The following tale of a sacred cow would hardly be

believed unless it had been told in a Calcutta police court :—

"THE GODDESS OF WEALTH.

"THE STORY OF A SACRED COW—DISPUTED CLAIM.

"The Commissioner of Police had before him a case of considerable interest and importance from a Hindu religious point of view, in which two Indian gentlemen of great influence and substantial means, Mr. A. and Mr. B., disputed each other's claim to a cow, which, owing to its singular peculiarities, is regarded and worked as 'Luchmi,' the goddess of wealth. On Saturday last Mr. A. reported at the Puddopuker Police Station that his most favourite and revered cow had mysteriously disappeared from his house, leaving behind its young calf, which probably would die for the loss of its mother. On the same day Mr. B. reported to the police that his cow, which was held in great religious veneration by him, and which had strayed away from his house about two years ago, had at last returned to its home. Inspector Aga Feruddin at the time did not treat Mr. B.'s report as having any bearing to the cow referred to by Mr. A., and so proceeded with an investigation into Mr. A.'s complaint. By a strange coincidence his enquiries led him to the residence of Mr. B., who on return home from work reluctantly delivered up the cow to the police, claiming the same as his property. Mr. B., it is said,

remarked that by the return of the cow his luck had returned to him. The peculiarities of this extraordinary cow were : Both its horns were small and shaky; she had a fifth small teat; her colour was reddish, and size small; she had a big tail, and was of a very quiet disposition. These characteristics and peculiarities pre-eminently rendered the cow to be regarded as 'Luchmi,' the goddess of wealth. The police found themselves confronted with a most perplexing situation, as both sides produced highly respectable and wealthy witnesses, who respectively supported the claim of the two disputants. In fact, some of Mr. A.'s witnesses went further by stating that they had made overtures to buy the cow for its great religious merits, but they met with disappointment, as Mr. A., who was equally alive to the priceless worth of the cow, emphatically refused to part with her. The police, in order to establish the claim of the disputants, put the cow to a test. The animal was set free to see if she would recognise and return to her home. The test, however, hopelessly failed, the cow being so docile and quiet that she entered any house when placed in front of the gateway. The police retained possession of the cow pending the decision of the Commissioner, who held that there could be no criminal liability against any of the disputants. The matter was one for the decision of a Civil Court. Meanwhile, it was

arranged that the cow should be sent back by Mr. B. to the house of Mr. A., so as to save from possible death the calf, by the absence of its mother."

If the so-called enlightened natives are so proud of magic one cannot wonder at the lower castes wearing a thread round the neck, with a small locket attached, which means a great deal to them; it has a charm in it, or else is a kind of amulet in itself for luck. In one leading shop the owner was trying to persuade me to buy one, saying how lucky it was; and I said, "Do you really think it lucky?" "Why, yes, Memsahib, I always wear one," and he burrowed into the folds of his clothing over his chest and produced a very fine ornament indeed, beautifully enamelled. It was quite hidden, and not worn for show in the least.

How did superstition first start? What a link it is between all nations, for almost every one has some pet form, in spite of our vaunted scorn of it.

The natives are very litigious. About April they begin their suits, the cold weather seemingly making them torpid! It is their New Year time, and they meet and sing songs, etc., and generally end in a riot. When they go to law, it is usually over a piece of land. They like to measure by a luggi—similar to the stick used by the Egyptians. One case was known about a man who wished to prove that his house was *on* the piece of land he had bought. He produced a plan, and said that the measurement from house to road was so much, and from the tri-junction so much; but he had

Bhutian Women.

measured one way by the luggi, and the other by the measure tape. The stick can be manipulated easily, of course, to make a line either shorter or longer, as wanted! It is extraordinary that, considering India has no gold currency, one quarter of the gold coinage produced is absorbed in that country.

It is a well-known fact that an Oriental does not understand what Truth is, and the only way sometimes of getting to know the actual facts of a case is by getting one side to swear by Ganges water, or on his son's head, that such and such a thing took place. "To the average native a lie is perhaps an abomination in the sight of the Lord, but a pleasing refuge in time of trouble."

CHAPTER XIII.

MARRIAGE CEREMONIES.

WHILE I was in Calcutta I had the privilege of attending a wedding ceremony of the Bramo-Sumaj, a new theistic Hindu sect, which preaches the equality of all men in the spiritual world. It was held in a large tent in the garden, called a shamiana, which was beautifully decorated, and accommodated all the smart set of Calcutta. The bridegroom and bride were both Indians; the former was clothed all in white in the native dress, and the bride was in pale pink with a white veil over the head. A small platform was erected in the one end of the shamiana, and on two chairs on this sat the happy couple. The priest sat at the other side of the table, and the father of the bride sat behind her. Rings were exchanged, which were placed all in readiness in their little cases on the table—this obviating the usual hunt the man in England has to make in his pocket for the ring. This was the form of service :—

" MARRIAGE SERVICE.

" The Minister : Let us invoke Him who is the God of gods, the Lord of lords, the End of ends : He whom all do worship.

" The Bride's Father (to the assembly) : I have brought before you ———, who is my

Ruins at Kutub Minar, Delhi.

second daughter and the grand-daughter of the late ———, in order that she may be united in holy wedlock to ———, son of the late ——— and grandson of the late ———, and I ask your permission for the same.

" The Assembly : So be it.

" The Bride's Father (to bridegroom) : ——— I have brought before you ———, my daughter and the grand-daughter of the late ———, in order that she might be wedded to you.

" Bridegroom : I deem myself fortunate.

" Bride's Father (to bridegroom) : On this auspicious occasion, may I offer to you these objects as tokens of my welcome and consideration ?

" Bridegroom : I accept.

" Bride's Father : On this auspicious occasion, I offer to you these small presents, as tokens of my pleasure and my joy.

" Bridegroom : I accept.

" The Minister (to bridegroom) : Are you ready, in the presence of the Holy God and in the presence of these assembled friends, and of your own free will and with all your heart, to accept this maiden ——— for your lawful wife, and to take upon yourself the duties of a good husband ?

" Bridegroom : I am willing to do so.

" Minister (to bride) : ——— are you ready, in the presence of the Holy God and in the presence of these assembled friends, and of

your own free will and with all your heart, to accept ——— for your lawful husband, and to take upon yourself the duties of a good and faithful wife?

"Bride: I am willing to do so.

"PRAYER AND MUSIC.

"THE MARRIAGE VOW.

"The Bridegroom: To-day, in the Bengali year 1319, on Monday, the 26th of Falgoon, and the 2nd day of the moon, in the presence of Him who witnesseth all and in that of assembled friends here, and knowing that you consent to this ceremony, I ——— take you ——— for my lawful wife, of my own free will and with all my heart.

"In prosperity as in adversity, in happiness as in sorrow, in health as in sickness, your welfare shall be my constant object, and all my life I shall endeavour to be your friend and companion in religion, in wealth, and in enjoyment.

"May my heart be one with yours, and your heart one with mine, and may both our hearts belong to God.

"Bride: To-day, in the Bengali year 1319, on Monday, the 26th of Falgoon, and the 2nd day of the moon, in the presence of Him who witnesseth all and in the presence of assembled friends here, and knowing that you consent to this ceremony, I ——— accept you ——— for my lawful husband, of my own free will and with all my heart.

"In prosperity as in adversity, in happiness as in sorrow, in health as in sickness, your welfare shall be my constant object, and all my life I shall endeavour to be your friend and companion in religion, in wealth, and in enjoyment.

"May my heart be one with yours and your heart one with mine, and may both our hearts belong to God.

"Bride and Bridegroom (together): O Lord! Be Thou our Guide to help us to observe this our marriage vow.

"EXCHANGE OF RINGS.

"SERMON AND PRAYER BY MINISTER."

At the middle of the ceremony a long garland of flowers was brought in and placed near, and then the bridegroom rose and placed part of it round the bride's neck, and afterwards she rose and placed some round his. After singing what might have been a hymn, they walked together, still with the garlands round them, down the tent to the house, and received their friends, much in the English fashion, in the drawing-room. They had native music for the service, but a band for the festivities afterwards. As they were walking down, this band played, by accident or design, "Everybody's doing it!" What struck me as curious was that, although all the Indian ladies at this function were out of purdah, yet two rooms were provided for them for refreshments, and when I came away I noticed that the women were all in one, and the men all in

another! The native music is very peculiar; it would take Western ears a long time to get used to it.

In the following form of service, *i.e.*, the Hindu, the father of the bride said that form of ceremony had been used for five thousand years:—

"MARRIAGE SERVICE."

"As the eye sees all objects extent in space, so the holy-minded behold at all times the divine reality of the all-pervading supreme spirit.

BENEDICTION.

"Bride's Father: On this auspicious ceremonial occasion of giving away my daughter, may it please you to say, Om, the day is holy.

"Bridegroom: Om, the day is holy.

"Bride's Father: On this auspicious ceremonial occasion of giving away my daughter, may it please you to say, Om, let us prosper.

"Bridegroom: Om, may there be prosperity.

"OFFERINGS TO THE BRIDEGROOM.

"Bride's Father: Om, pray accept these offerings.

"Bridegroom: Om, I accept the offerings.

"Bride's Father: Om, pray accept these garments.

"Bridegroom: Om, I accept these garments.

"Bride's Father: Om, pray accept this ring.

" Bridegroom : Om, I accept this ring.

" VARAN OF THE BRIDEGROOM.

" Bride's Father : Om Tatsat, in the month of Falgun, in the Aquarius sign of the zodiac, in the dark fortnight, on the seventh day of moon, being desirous of giving away in happy marriage my daughter, ——— gotra, ——— prabara, daughter of ———, grand-daughter of ——— to ——— gotra of ——— prabara, son of ——— grandson of ——— great-grandson of ———,I honour thee with these gifts, having chosen thee to be the bridegroom.

" Bridegroom : Om, I accept the honour.

" Bride's Father : Om, let us proceed with the wedding ceremony in due form.

" Bridegroom : Om, I shall do so, to the best of my knowledge.

" (The bridegroom is then taken to the inner apartments, for Stri-achar—Women's ceremonies.)

" On the return of the bridegroom with the bride divine worship is held, beginning and ending with a Vedic hymn, followed by the Sampradan, or the Giving away ceremony.

" Bride's Father : Om, I give this maiden unto thee.

" Bridegroom : Om, do thou bestow her.

" Bride's Father : Om Tatsat, on this day, in the month of Falgun, in the Aquarius sign of the zodiac, in the dark fortnight, on the seventh day of the moon, I ——— of the ——— gotra, for the love of God, give unto thee, the

noble, honoured and God-fearing believer in the faith, ——— gotra of ——— grandson of ——— great-grandson of ——— this maiden ———adorned with jewels, free from ailments, well-bred and arrayed in fine raiment, of ——— gotra, of ——— prabara, daughter of ——— grand-daughter of ———, great-grand-daughter of ———.

TO BE REPEATED THREE TIMES.

"Bridegroom: Om, so be it.

"Bride's Father: Do not thou exceed her in Dharma (righteousness), Artha (worldly goods), or Kama (earthly pleasures).

"Bridegroom: I shall not exceed her.

"Bride's Father: Om, Tatsat, on this day, in the month of Falgun, in the sign Aquarius of the zodiac, in the dark fortnight, on the seventh day of the moon, I, ——— of the ——— gotra give unto thee, thou noble and God-fearing believer in the faith ——— gotra, of ——— prabara, son of ——— grandson of ——— this gold coin, as a token of esteem, and for the due performance of the auspicious ceremony just performed of giving away my daughter.

"Bridegroom: Om, so be it.

"After tying the bridal knot, the bridegroom will repeat these words:

"With this true knot do I bind thy mind and heart, may my heart be thine, and thy heart be mine, as the heavens are steadfast, as the earth is steadfast, as this whole universe

is steadfast, and as the mountains are steadfast, so may this wife remain steadfast in her husband's family.

"Taking the bride's hands in his own, the husband will repeat:

"I, the husband, take thy hands in mine for the sake of good fortune, so that thou mayst for ever abide with me. May thy eyes look with favour, may thy deeds be beneficial to thy husband; mayst thou be kind to all creatures, may thy mind be beautiful, mayst thou be high-spirited, may thy sons be brave and long-lived, mayst thou be devoted to God, and happy in thy lot and good to men and animals. Mayst thou be like a queen to thy father-in-law, mother-in-law, sisters-in-law and brothers-in-law. May thy heart be devoted to my cause, may thy mind be like unto mine, may thou fulfil my behests with a single mind, may God, the source of all righteousness, draw thee towards me.

"Then, mentioning her own name in her husband's gotra, the bride will salute her husband as follows: I, ——— gotra, salute thee.

"Husband (saluting in return): Om, mayst thou live long.

"Then follow the priest's sermon and benediction, after which comes

"THE SEVEN STEPS CEREMONY.

"Bridegroom: This bride is of good omen, look upon her, all of you, and having given

her your blessings, go ye home.

"He then causes the bride to step seven steps, saying to her:

"Om, take thou the first steps for coming nearer to God, and follow me.

"Om, take thou the second step for the sake of strength, follow me.

"Om, take thou the third step for the sake of thy life's mission, and follow me.

"Om, take thou the fourth step for the sake of happiness, and follow me.

"Om, take thou the fifth step for the sake of offspring, follow me.

"Om, take thou the sixth step for the sake of prosperity, and follow me.

"Take thou the seventh step for the sake of friendship with me, and follow me.

"Having taken the seventh step, be my friend, may I gain thy friendship, may no other women sever this our bond of friendship; may kindly omen unite us in bonds of friendship.

At an evening (or one might say "night") garden-party that I went to, a company of perhaps twelve natives sat or squatted down and played very weird instruments; some were long shaped, with a bulb at the end. No one seemed to conduct, and the musicians never looked at one another, which argues that in their way they are excellent musicians. This party was very interesting; held in one of the large club compounds in Calcutta. The trees were beautifully illuminated by fairy electric lights, arranged in such a light and graceful

Native Refreshment Stall at a wayside Indian Station.

way as to take away all sense of the stiffness as is so often noticeable in England. It was a party where blacks and whites mixed, or, shall I say, were present, as they do not "mix." Of course, a great deal is being done now to break down the prejudice of race, and naturally the Europeans think that it is all the fault of the white people; but I don't know but that at heart the black has got quite as strong a distaste for us. There is an institution now in India, called the National Indian Association, for the purpose of bringing out Indian high caste women who are no longer purdah. In Calcutta they have a fine club-house, and some of the ladies go there for tea and music and a social gathering; but a lot of them seem very much out of it, though one Indian lady said to me she thought it was such a good thing—this club—"for the *mutual* benefit of Indians and Europeans!"

One day I was present there at a lecture given by a hospital nurse, and she and other speakers urged the high caste Hindus to take up nursing; one lady who had lived out there for some time said that the highest in the land in England did so, therefore why not they? Of course, their caste is against it, and anyone living amongst them must know that it is hopeless to think of altering it for the next three or four generations. One Indian lady said to me after: "It is of no use talking like that; we cannot even nurse our own families; for if one is sick and another holds the bowl, she has to take four or five baths afterwards, be it summer or winter."

My friends, being members of the Calcutta Turf Club, had a box in the grand stand, and facing us was the huge crowd of natives, forming a most picturesque sight with all their bright-coloured turbans and white—clothes, I was going to say, but coverings would be more apt. The natives love a gamble, even if it is only in pice—the smallest coins. Some of the horses have rather a bad time of it when they come out from England; after the voyage they are so out of condition, that sometimes to walk from the station to their trainer's stalls is enough to injure them, so they generally have to be conveyed in slings, and only allowed a little exercise at first, and sometimes will be a month before they are fit, and used to the climate. Calcutta people certainly know how to amuse themselves, and, indeed, how to give pleasure to their friends from England, for the charming hospitality they showed me made my visit there very enjoyable. Of course, being in India, we naturally wanted to test the Hindu powers of palmistry, so one day told the bearer to find a good palmist or fortune-teller and bring him to the hotel. I impressed on him that it was one who reads hands—pointing to my own palm, and insisting on "reading hands"; now you quite understand. "Oh, yes, Memsahib," said he. Next morning he gravely presented me with a card, saying the man will come at twelve o'clock. The card was the business card of a shop where "Ladies and children's clothes are all made *by hand.*"

We were out when the man came; most probably

he brought half his shop with him, as one of the objectionable things, in Calcutta at any rate, was the habit the natives have of coming to your verandah to sell things. They squat down on the floor, and open innumerable bundles; they will not go until you have bought something, and even then fold up their articles with exasperating slowness. But you cannot hurry the Easterns!

Shopping in the market was very amusing: they haven't much idea of fair play, as while you are looking at one stall, other owners come up and press you to inspect their far superior stock. When you go in, you soon find you are shadowed by a man carrying on his head a basket about three yards round, and you notice that when you enter an opening he squats down outside, probably being joined by another man and another basket. These are for your purchases—the coolie waiting to carry them home for you. In some of the shops they are most trusting; they say, "Take it, and send me the money when you get back to England"; and they will let you take quite valuable jewels away to see if you like them. Probably one is shadowed afterwards to see where one goes; but it appears rather a risky way of doing business. It is quite interesting to see this market in the early morning; outside, great heaps of fruit are placed—mangoes, cape-gooseberries, plantains, small oranges, limes, and many others—and most beautiful flowers are to be had. Later in the day they are put in tin boxes, shut up to keep them fresh.

CHAPTER XIV.

BENARES AND LUCKNOW.

OUR start to Benares from Calcutta was from Howrah station, and, leaving at about nine at night, we arrived at Benares about 10-30 next day. Benares, the sacred city, the city of Brahma the Creator, Vishnu the Preserver, and Siva the Destroyer, about which one had heard so much and which was one of the chief places I wanted to see, in India. Alas! for one's disillusionment. It was the most native of native cities; and when you have said that you mean a great deal—a great deal of squalor, and smells, and dirt and dust, heat and horrors. The whole town has a population of about 210,000, and is filled with pilgrims and their retinues of beggars. It is such a sacred place that, even if an infidel dies there, he is saved! The river is the great central scene; all along the one side it is crowded with shrines and ghats for bathing and burning, both almost indiscriminately used, as close by a burning-ghat, where we saw three Hindus in various stages of cremation (one with feet dangling from the pyre), women were washing themselves and their clothes.

The burning ghats have a good deal of ceremony connected with them, little as one may think it when one sees a corpse being hurried along on a

Benares.

rude bier, balanced on poles on men's shoulders. On arriving at the ghat, the body is covered with fagots, except the head. Then a relation walks round it six times, dropping water out of a bowl; a relation must light the first fagot, and also cleave open the head with an axe, so that the spirit may be loosed from the body.

The great god Siva is supposed to live here, and the Bisheshwar Temple is dedicated to him; it goes by the name of the Golden Temple because its domes are made of copper. It is small, with extremely narrow passages and stairways. In the centre is a kind of platform, on which no European may step, and on which I innocently mounted; but my friend quickly pulled me off, or I don't know what might have happened. Quantities of flowers were lying about—votive offerings—marigolds being the favourites; wreaths of them, too, for the devotees to wear. It is by no means unusual to meet men walking along in the towns of India with a wreath of these blossoms round their necks. Up the stairs in this temple we ventured, wanting to see everything; but we came down quicker than we went up, for the high priests were so tumultuous for backsheesh that the friend who was with us was anxious to get us out as soon as possible, as one never knows what these fanatics might do next. Women, of course, are specially despised, so one was glad to have a "protector of the poor" with us; between him and our servant Imdad we made our exit with dignified haste.

Near this temple is the Well of Knowledge, aptly

described in the guide-books as "an evil-smelling cesspool, from the decaying flowers thrown into it as offerings." An old temple, which was destroyed by the Mohammedan Aurungzeb, stood on this site; the idol was thrown into the well, and this, added to the belief that Siva lives here, makes the tank sacred. Aurungzeb put his mosque right in the middle of the Hindu shrines by malice intent, evidently, and it is still a source of quarrel between the two sects. The Brass Bazaar is one of the sights of Benares, a very narrow alley, as "evil-smelling" as the Well of Knowledge, with the narrow path in the middle all dug up, adding to its hundred-and-one smells; it was not a place in which to loiter and make bargains, nor were the other bazaars we visited. I have visited a few odoriferous places in the East, but Benares and the Kasbah in Algiers, as high as pheasants in March, take the chief place in my memory.

We decided after that we would have a row on the Ganges, thinking the air on the water would be fresher; but—we reckoned without the smell of roast Hindu! We wended our way to the Dascowarneach Ghat, the central one of the city. Although Hindus think so much of the sanctity of the Ganges, they have no special place set apart for the dying and the burnings. When any Hindu is at the point of death, he is carried to the river and placed on the bank, so that his feet may rest in the water, and that quite ensures salvation in the future life. Tradition says that if a patient takes too long a time in saying farewell to this

world, a little of the sacred mud put into their mouths by their relatives expedites matters.

Sitting on chairs on the deck of the queer-shaped boats, rowed and punted by several blacks, we saw the life on the banks very well. These banks are very steep, and have many steps or slopes, dotted here and there with enormous umbrellas, under which sit the caterers of food, fruits, etc. Cows, also sacred, lie on the slopes; snake-charmers wait about to show their wonders; boatmen squat waiting for hire; washing (of linen—and persons) is performed very much in public; and in the midst of it all are the burning ghats. In one of these, three Hindus were being cremated. A few logs of wood are taken from the great piles stacked up ready for the purpose, then the body, just wrapped up in a bit of muslin, is laid on it, one large fagot placed on the top, to which a relative applies a torch, and then more fagots are heaped on till the whole is ablaze. A special low caste Hindu is stoker, and may be seen poking and stirring it up, piling on more fuel. Now and then an arm or a leg drops off, and the ashes and any bones that may be left are thrown into the river. Horrible pariah dogs sometimes look on, knowing that pieces are thrown in as well as bones sometimes, which means a *bonne bouche* for them. Life and death are mixed up in a most casual way.

How different the same things can be to different people. To our Western views it all seems horribly ghoulish, but to them it is all real religion, and as such we must respect it; but such respect is

tempered with an unholy desire to get away from them and their uncanny habits. Still, burning seems much more reasonable than the Parsee way of disposing of bodies after death. They are given to the vultures, and some birds may have a little difference of opinion over their dinner and wish to fly off with a choice bit, and in their greedy hurry drop an ear or a finger in the gardens around, which is not exactly what one would care to find! The whole bank of the river for a long distance is interspersed with ghats, shrines and temples, the graceful minarets of which make a most effective picture, and it is—barring the smells—wonderfully entertaining to float down the river and watch what goes on along the banks. The contrast of the squalor near the water and the spires and minarets of the old palaces on the top is extraordinary, palaces and temples mixed up together with blissful disregard of order or symmetry. Benares is celebrated as being the place where the great Hindu poet, Tulsi Das, lived and wrote the Ramayan, about 1590. He was quite a teacher in his day, and led the people to a greater perception of a higher life. Tulsi is a favourite name for the natives now.

We paid a visit to the palace of the Maharaja Vizianagram, who allows Europeans to see the palace and grounds on presentation of a visiting card. It is a fine enough house, but a peculiar mixture of Oriental and Western furnishing, early, very early, Victorian chairs and sofas clash with Eastern settees, carpets, etc.

The Thalteri Bazaar for brass-workers is a narrow, very narrow lane, close to the Chauk or Central square, where the little idols, figures, bowls, and innumerable articles of brassware are made and sold. The footway of this lane was being dug up, for what reason no one could tell; drains are non-existent; it might have been for water-pipes; but the planks covering up the holes were very disagreeable to walk on, and made us take a speedy departure from that place.

The whole of Benares is most depressing; the filthy streets, the roads thick with dust, in which naked babies and people lie asleep; the dervishes with horrible "pi" dogs, as they call the pariah mongrels; and yet it has its fascination as a microcosm of Indian beliefs and customs. The Darga Kund, or Monkey Temple, is the great shrine. It is not very ancient—only 100 or so years old. It has a quadrangle round it, with a platform at each side, where numbers of monkeys of all sizes disport themselves; several baby ones, tiny wee things, tenderly looked after by their mothers. They say the way to get to a mother's heart is to admire the baby. I proceeded to do this, but in this respect they are *not* like us, and she made for me with very bad language. Priests swarm as thickly as monkeys there, and a solemn dog sat in the middle and looked with supreme scorn at everybody. All who go there buy some nuts to feed the animals, and the floor is strewn with shells and *débris* from their meals. One heard in the trees many more of our little relatives playing.

This worship of animals by the Hindus is an extraordinary mixture of kindness and cruelty. They will not kill an animal, because it is a sin to take life, but they will leave an ox or a horse on the road, with a broken leg, to die when it can! There is a charming Anglican Church outside Benares, near the cantonments: just a little touch of home.

Lucknow was a delightful change; fresher air, spacious cantonments, palaces with plenty of space round—not so crowded up together as at Benares. It has been the capital of Oudh since 1775. It gives an impression of stately grandeur. The old palaces stand in park-like grounds; the modern colleges are important-looking, and are in good positions; the cantonments in delightful shady roads round Dilkusha. Still, there is the native part, which is equal to that of any other Indian city. I was driven by a friend through some of the chief native streets in the Bazaar, and never could I have imagined such horrible hosts of flies. They were thick on everything, and particularly on the food and on the fried cakes and sweetstuffs laid out for sale almost on the ground. Truly, the plague of flies to the Israelites must have been bad if it were anything like this.

Naturally, the chief point of interest for us English is the Residency, round which so many memories lie—memories of dear ones who took part in the wonderful siege, and of all the other brave men and women who endured the awful horrors of it in the Indian hot weather. It is a most

exquisite spot now, beautifully kept; trees have grown round it, great flowering shrubs throw their gorgeous blossoms over the ruined walls, and high on the top of the tower floats, night and day, our Union Jack, the only flag in the Empire that is not taken down at sunset, because it flew through all the siege. Almost under the shadow of it lies the cemetery, and the foundations of the church which the enemy burnt down. In this hallowed acre only Europeans are allowed to go, and the graves of our heroes are kept in peace and quietness, looked after by our white people. It is, in truth, a hallowed spot, with a holy stillness brooding over it; full of flowering shrubs, which cling to and cover the graves as if they, too, would cherish the memory of those who fought and gave their lives for our Empire.

The friend who drove me all through the grounds had been in the service a long time, and knew every part by heart, and reconstructed the whole so clearly that one could almost fancy one could see the cellar still full of women and children; the room in Sir Joseph Fayrer's house where the dying Sir Henry Lawrence lay; the Redan which the soldiers kept; Johannes' house where the negro, Bob the Nailer, shot every one who passed along the path; the women's part, and all the various points of vantage the enemy had against us. What a changed scene now—the beautiful stillness, the gorgeous bougainvilleas, the stately trees, and the well-kept paths and lawns—contrasted with the carnage and horror of 1857. It is just like a ruined abbey in England,

kept as nicely as Fountains Abbey is. The old palaces are very imposing-looking places; the Chutta Munzil, or Umbrella Palace, built by Mair-ad-din is now the United Service Club; and a palatial one it is indeed, with its marble halls and kingly rooms, and a splendid terrace overhanging the River Gumti.

Tea with a friend on this terrace one evening was rather amusing, for a Khitmutghar had to stand by our table all the time to flip-flap the flies off! There is a large Government House in Lucknow where the Governor of the United Provinces lives during the cold weather, and a tremendously large garrison—one of the largest in India—all planned so that no houses intercept what would be the line of fire were there another rising, and all the lines kept in touch with one another. There are several native, as well as British, regiments quartered there. Just then the Gordon, Seaforth and Black Watch Highlanders were stationed at Dilkusha, and a unique sight was the Highland gathering under a hot Indian sun, when the Tommies in their kilts and Tam o'Shanters, scorning their solar topees, braved the scorching rays, and danced their reels and sword dances as gaily as if under the gray skies of North Scotland at Braemar. The pipers made a brave show, and marched their massed band up and down the course with great pride, no doubt flattered by the large crowd of English people in the grand stand, which was nicely shaded, so that one could see it all in comfort. One little bit of unrehearsed performance was a game between two

dogs right in the middle of the course, a small black one and a fox terrier. One had in his mouth something evidently worth running for; and the dodges the terrier was up to, to get hold of it! He would chase the little one, running corners off to get a short cut; in and out, these two had their afternoon of sport, quite oblivious of bands or reels. A delicious tea in the enclosure was very welcome, and the speciality of the regiments in the way of a drink was served as well. From the ingredients of which I was told it was composed—cream, honey, and whiskey—I thought I would not sample it!

A torchlight tattoo at night was held under much pleasanter conditions than it ever can be in England—no fear of rain or wind spoiling it, and the night just cool enough to be enjoyable. There was no mistake, the Highlanders did the whole thing well, and it all went off successfully; but it really was very funny to go to India to see a purely Scottish entertainment.

Here is an instance of how absolutely non-existent is English education amongst the native servant class. My friend and I were going out to the cantonments to luncheon one day, and left Imdad at the hotel, as it was his time off. The gharri-wallah could neither speak nor understand English. He was told the address, and started off; but he didn't know the way, and drove along quite regardless of time, as usual. I knew we were on the wrong road, but how to get to the right one was "another pair of shoes!" We pointed, and poked, and cried 89 Dilkusha, till we were in

despair. Several natives passed, but none who could speak English. At last I got out at one gate and found a Durwan who could understand a little of our lingo, and eventually we arrived. The house, or rather bungalow, was very nice, with a lovely garden, in one part of which our host has his bed in the hot weather, between two poles, on which is slung the punkah, which is worked all night by a coolie. The night-watchman was taking his sleeping-time on one of the walks, rolled up in his rugs. The stables were a great feature, and held one of the finest trotting horses in India, amongst numbers of others. But what stables! To one's Western eyes they seemed so different from our clean, well-kept, well-built ones, which are in many cases quite as well arranged as a house. These had no doors, nor even ends to the stalls at all, they were quite open on one side. A small black podian followed round with some greenstuff for us to give to the animals, but being always available, it is not the joy to horses there which it is to our stall-kept animals in England, and so they take it as a matter of course.

The Alum Bagh, on the Cawnpore Road, is interesting, as being the burial place of General Havelock. Near by are the ruins of the house where Outram took up his position in the Mutiny; a capital view is obtained from the flat roof. But the most delightful ruined palace is Dilkusha—the Palace of the Heart's Delight. It stands in a charming garden. The space round these old places is quite vast; no cramped-up pleasure-

grounds for these rajahs of old, either during their life or round their tombs or mosques.

This one at Dilkuska has glorious flowers and quite green lawns, making a delightful setting for the ruins of the palace, which is overgrown with creepers, the lawns being, for India, quite a feature, and the verdant hue being accomplished by perpetual soaking with pipes. One would think a hose would be more effective; but probably the rubber would melt in the sun, and these pipes are simply the kind one has on a house in England, arranged in sections so that they can be moved about as required.

Not far off are the ruins of Secundra Bagh, where a number of rebels were encamped during the Mutiny, but were successfully routed by the British; and close by are some horticultural gardens. These one sees on the way to La Martinière College, which place was built by a Frenchman who, originally a soldier in Lally's Army, entered the East India Company's service, and rose to be a General. It is a huge building, and takes about 250 boys. Volunteer service was always a feature of the College; and during the Mutiny, when the boys were all collected inside the Residency, they were able to take part in the defence, and the Martinière post is still shewn. This also stands in park-like grounds, and the tomb of the General is in a crypt under the rather fine chapel attached to the College.

One of the least interesting of the palaces. but still one worthy of a visit, is the Husainabad

Imambarah, built in 1837 by Mohammed Ali Shah as his burial place. It has a very gimcrack effect, tinsel, glass, and bits of tin being favourite decorations, as well as enormous chandeliers with innumerable lamps. These are all lighted up at the Muharram Festival, which must make the whole building one blaze of light. A similar illumination goes on at the tomb of Shah Najaf, where on the anniversary of his death the whole place is illuminated, and the rest of the year the lamps are all left lying about. What can be at the back of the Oriental mind to desire such a peculiar celebration of the event?

The Great Imambarah is a very extensive building, with a handsome mosque and great hall, but the decorations are somewhat feeble. There are many new colleges now in Lucknow, enormous buildings for Indians, an indication of the growth of education amongst them. Some of these colleges are cheap, and the native assimilates knowledge quickly, but is not able to make much use of it afterwards; though, of course, many Indians get on very well, and fill high positions. A college education is thought a great deal of, even if no degree is obtained, as an advertisement is often seen in the papers for a "failed B.A. with a knowledge of typewriting." It is unfortunately among this class of failures, who are waiting about, as it were, for "something to turn up," that dissatisfaction and unrest are mostly to be found. Especially is this the case in Bengal, where nearly all the men want to be in "office."' The Bengalis

Waiting for the Train, India.

never will do any active work if they can help it, except, perhaps, till their grounds; they never provide soldiers, and out of the whole of Bengal hardly a man enters the Army.

From Lucknow it is not a far cry to Cawnpore, that city of sad memories which depresses the visitor, meeting as one does traces of the horrible Mutiny-time at every point. The Memorial, the Massacre Ghat, the Church full of pathetic tablets recording the deaths of brave men, the cross on Wheeler's entrenchments—all tell but eloquently the tale of the awful price we had to pay for India. What land has caused so many heart-aches and breaks as this—the actual death of loved ones; the separation of families on account of its climate, a death in life to many a loving heart. We have kept it at a fearful cost—shall we have it much longer? Are the people we are now training there men who will repay us for all we have spent for them; or will it be India for the Indians only? Who can tell?*

The Memorial Gardens in Cawnpore are very beautiful, a perfect and hallowed spot, where no native is allowed to enter without a pass for actual work in the gardens. There is a beautiful "Angel of The Resurrection" over the well, into which the women and children were thrown, surrounded by a graceful Gothic screen of delicate tracery, and a path by which one can walk all round it. It is always kept locked, and a soldier in uniform is in charge. The Bougainvilleas there were magnificent; I never saw finer. One bush was absolutely

* This was written before the glorious rally of India in the Great War.

a mass of glowing colour; not a speck of green leaf could be seen. It is very beautiful to see how these places are kept and reverenced after so many years. One wonders whether the battlefields of South Africa will be remembered, and the graves tended with as much care fifty years hence. Other generations will be here then, and know nothing of the cruel time it was to us who had to live through it.

Over the arch in the Memorial is written, "These are they who came out of great tribulation," a motto applicable to all the survivors, surely, as much as to those who died there. The Massacre Ghat is close to a ruined temple of Siva, also called the Suttee Ghoura, where the widows were burned on the death of their husbands.

Cawnpore itself is a dreary place. The day I was there it was hot and stifling. The hotel could only provide 2-anna soda-water, which was so cheap as to suggest it being made from the nearest tank. Tea was ordered, but the water hadn't boiled, so we were afraid to touch it, not only from distaste of its muddy appearance, but for fear of that water too, coming from the nearest puddle. A chemist's shop offered possibilities in the way of Apollinaris, and the owner was good enough to provide glasses for us to drink it there. Alas! when the bottle was opened, it was as flat as ditch-water and undrinkable, and we were dying of thirst—thirst such as only those who know the tropics can appreciate.

A Street in Agra.

CHAPTER XV.

AGRA.

AGRA, the second city of the United Provinces, is full of glory. Of course, it is chiefly remembered by the Taj Mahal; but the fort, the tomb of Itmad ad Daulah, the wonderful Fatepur Sikri, the tomb of Akbar at Secundra, the choice little Chini Ka Rauza, all are wonderful creations of Moghul art.

The Taj—one of the seven wonders of the world—which people go half round the globe to see, has been described so often, painted and photographed, almost "cheapened"—till you see it. That wonderful building, set in amongst the palms and spacious lawns, with the favourite water-way leading up to it—how beautiful it is! I saw it first early on a Sunday morning, in the glorious sunlight, with the rich blue radiantly tropical sky as background, amidst the green verdure of the trees, which form an avenue leading up to the dazzling whiteness of the building. How gloriously triumphant that shrine appears! I say triumphant, for it is a triumph of marvellous art. It is difficult to say under what aspect it looks its best: it was glorious by sunlight; it was exquisite by moonlight. To see it by the latter was so alluring, to wander quietly along near the reflection on the still waters, with no disturbing crowds by; to climb the steps

on to the great platform and wander round on it by the wide Jumna flowing placidly below, and sit and look at the ethereal softness of it all, was a dream of delight.

By day I went inside the tomb, where the wife of Shah Jehan, who built it, the beautiful Mumtaz Mahal, the Pearl of the Palace, is buried, and there later on the old Emperor himself was laid to rest beside her, his favourite wife. Their monuments lie in the centre of the great hall, where the brilliant sunlight filters through the marble-traceried windows, making a soft twilight, bright enough to see the flowers which are decorating the marble walls all round. Exquisite clumps of iris, of lotus, all inlaid with precious stones of lapis lazuli, cornelian, turquoise, bloodstone, onyx, jade, agate, etc. In each flower alone are about thirty distinct inlays, and real blossoms are brought every day by the janitors, who offer some to you, so that you may lay them in great reverence on the tombs.

This wonderful building was not only Indian in its erection; master builders came from many places, chief masons from Bagdad and Delhi, Samarkand and Asiatic Turkey, mosaic workers from Kanany. "Every part of India contributed the materials: Jaipur the marble; Fatepur Sikri the sandstone; the Punjaub, the jasper; China, the jade and crystal; Thibet, the turquoise; Ceylon, lapis lazuli and sapphires; Arabia, coral and cornelian; Panna, in Bradelkund, diamonds; Persia, onyx and amethyst. Twenty thousand men were employed in the construction,

which took seventeen years to complete." Thus writes Mr. Harell.

The monuments lie in the centre surrounded by a most exquisite screen of marble tracery, and the real tombs lie immediately below in the crypt. One has to go down a stairway to them, and here are "priests or levites" in charge, who give you a flower to lay on the graves. Although one may not think with them, the atmosphere is so impregnated with the love and devotion of the Emperor for his wife that, instinctively, one accepts the flowers and places them on the marble tomb. The gardens are absolutely delightful to sit in, under the shadow of palms watching the little squirrels flitting about in and out of the leaves, and dreaming of the past. The solitude is hardly broken, except perhaps by the chatter of a party of natives who come to see the beautiful shrine, and their voices, even, are hushed inside the mausoleum. How strange it seems that though 300 years have passed since Mumtaz Mahal was interred there, homage is still rendered to her, even if it is only a tiny flower to lay upon the tomb. The gardens, also, are a haven of refuge at dusk for hosts of wild peacocks, who know they will there get a safe sanctuary.

The old custom of placing tombs in a garden was a beautiful idea. A Mohammedan never despoiled a grave; so that however turbulent a life one of that faith may have had, he was always sure of his tomb being safe after his death; and it was a usual thing for a Mohammedan to build his tomb

in his lifetime, even as did the builders of the Pyramids. And in another garden is the tomb of Itmad-ad-Daulah, the grandfather of Mumtaz Mahal, who was, some say, a Persian; others say a native of Western Tartary. He was the Grand Wizier or Prime Minister of Akbar. The tomb is a very splendid specimen of marble tracery in the screens which are really the windows, the lattice-work carving admitting light and air. The richness of the pavilion inside, in carving and inlay-work, is superb. The real tombs are in the lower part, and the monumental ones in the upper, formed of yellow marble. The building is square in shape, with the raised pavilion in the centre, and an octagonal tower at each corner, and towering high on the bank above the River Jumna.

Agra may be said to have "the pick of the basket" in the way of buildings, for the Fort is another treasury of exquisite mosques and halls. This was built by the great Mogul Emperor Akbar in 1566. Its vast walls, seventy feet high and a mile and a half round, are magnificent. One enters through the Delhi gate, and going up a steep incline all paved, the Elephant Gate appears, an enormous structure of early Mogul style, having the music gallery, where royal kettledrums announced the Emperor's arrival or departure on state occasions; and the whole is splendidly carved and decorated, even bearing traces of enamelled tile work. Through this gate one goes on to the Pearl Mosque, the "Muti Mosjid" completed by Shah Jehan. Many steps lead up to this, and then opens out a fine

cloistered quadrangle, with a tank in the centre, all being of white marble so dazzlingly bright that one's eyes ache with the reflection of it. Beautiful carving and inlay work are here seen at their best, and the geometrical designs are all planned out with remarkable effect. At the one end is the mosque with its aisles and bays, surmounted by three domes; then comes the armoury square, with the Diwan-i-am, or Hall of Audience, on the left. In front of it was the platform for the King's throne; and immediately below a slab of marble, a kind of raised table for the Grand Wizier to sit on; while above are latticed windows, from which the ladies of the Court could take a peep at what was going on. By many winding steps we go from one hall to another, from one open space to yet a larger, each one more interesting than the last, till we come to the Jasmine Tower, the residence of the chief lady of the harem. In the ladies' rooms holes in the walls are seen, like pockets, where it is said they kept their jewels; they are just sufficiently deep to put one's hand into. From the window of this tower Shah Jehan gazed out on to the Taj when he was dying, taking a farewell look at the place where his loved "Crown of the World" lay. A large block of black marble, placed near the wall on the side of the river, is called the Black Throne. It has a groove in it, said to have been caused in days of old, when the Rajah of Bharatpur, the great robber, seated himself upon it, and has also an indented piece, caused by a cannon ball, which hit it and glanced off and entered the wall

beyond! There is the Golden Pavilion, the Palace of Mirrors, the Grape Garden, where grapes were grown in peculiarly shaped trenches, the Palace of Jahangir; in fact, one palace after another seemed to be inside that fort. Verily, these ancient Moguls had expensive tastes. One could wander from one place to another for days, finding out fresh treasures in the carvings and inlay work in the marble. The whole is so spacious, and so marvellously planned, that one becomes lost in wonder as one tries to take in all the enchanting designs.

Beyond the fort and Itmad-ud-Daulah's tomb is a charming little ruined mosque perched high above the banks of the Jumma, the Chini Ka Rauza, the tomb of a Persian poet who was Grand Wizier to Shah Jehan. Originally it was covered with mosaic work, but the weather has taken most of the glory off, though it is quite a unique little place, away from the road and overhanging the river, down which one can look and watch the kites playing about with the crows, ever chattering, and the green parakeets flitting through the evening air.

CHAPTER XVI.

FATEPUR SIKRI.

FATEPUR SIKRI, the famous deserted city, lies about twenty-three miles from Agra. I motored out there along the very uninteresting road, which they are trying to make less dull, though, by planting trees by the wayside. This great city of the Moguls, entirely built by Akbar round the dwelling place of the Saint Salim Christi, was about six miles in circumference, surrounded on three sides by high walls, the fourth side had a large lake, now dry, so it takes a long time to look at the halls and palaces, mosques and tombs, the Mint, the Treasury, the stables, the elephant garden, etc. The Zenana quarter is rather quaintly described by the Sheikh who showed us round, as the house of Akbar's three wives, the Hindu, the Mohammedan, and the Christian one, with the different staircases they used. Apparently they all lived on very good terms, as tradition says that the Emperor used to play at hide-and-seek with them, and no little trivial game that in a palace of such vastness. The buildings are all wonderfully carved, especially the Panch Mahal, or five-storied pavilion, the place where the ladies of the harem could sit and watch the public amusements. In the quadrangle of the great palace is a pachisi-board cut in the pavement —similar to a chess-board—and here Akbar and his

wives would sit and play the game, with slave-girls as pieces.

What wonderful scenes must have been enacted in this huge city! One can picture it full of dusky people clad in their gorgeous robes of glowing colours crowding round, as no doubt they did, just as they do know; the interior of the halls hung with priceless embroideries and hangings of rich textures; the jewels of the Rajahs shining and glittering with all the wealth of the Indies, as they sat in the brilliant light under the canopies and verandahs amidst all the splendours of an Eastern Court; the sowars of state with their ceremonies; the astrologer, or Yogi, sitting in his hall, and often consulted by Akbar, who believed strongly in occultism. What a dream picture it is—and all this for only seventeen years: as Omar says, "With his Pomp—abode his Hour or two, and went his way."

Tradition says that the saint round whom the city was built was disturbed by all the pomp and panoply of the court, and at last said that either he or the Emperor must go. "Then let it be your servant, I pray," replied Akbar; and he returned with all his court to Agra. Akbar was evidently a man of broad views, having wives of three different religions! He also knew somewhat of Christianity, for he allowed the Jesuit Fathers to build a hospital in the city, and also a small chapel. Once it is said he permitted a Christian funeral to go through the streets of Fatepur Sikri with all the ceremonies of the Faith. The tomb of the saint, who survived

some time, is high up on the great quadrangle, in one corner of it, the most exquisite thing possible, and worthy to be inside the Taj itself. In shape it is rather like a four-post bedstead, covered entirely with small pieces of mother-of-pearl. This, too, is surrounded by an entrancingly beautiful screen of lattice-work marble, so light and delicate that it might be of lace. The reason of Akbar's going to Fatepur was because he attributed to the saint's prayers the birth of an heir; and to this day childless mothers still wind bits of ribbon or silk on one lattice window, as votive offerings to him: very quaint they look, these little strips amongst such splendours. Close by is the mosque, one of the most magnificent of Akbar's buildings; it is said to be copied from the one at Mecca, but there are traces of Hindu influence in its architecture of spacious aisles and cloisters. In this quadrangle also is the glorious gate, the most splendid in the world, the Baland Darwazah or Gate of Victory, 170 feet high from the roadway. It simply fills one with a feeling of awe, it is so superbly grand, standing on such an eminence looking over the plains—the Taj, even, twenty-five miles away, is to be seen from it; and naturally it is in itself a landmark for miles around. There are three doors recessed in this gateway. Over the one on the right is written in Arabic, "Said Jesus, on Whom be peace, this world is a bridge, pass over it, but build no house there. He who hopeth for an hour may hope for eternity—the world is but an hour, spend it in devotion; the rest is worth nothing."

Over the other is inscribed, "He that standeth up in prayer and his heart is not in it, does not draw nigh unto God, but remaineth far from Him. Thy best possession is what thou givest in the name of God, thy best traffic is selling this world for the next." And we in our arrogance call the people who wrote this, and whose faith still lives, heathens, and think ourselves better than they! Oh! the self-righteousness of us all.

Possibly Fatepur Sikri owes its preservation to being away so far from any other towns; for the buildings are still wonderful. The city might only have been left a decade or two, instead of 300 years ago. There are no ruined arches, no broken columns, or decay on the walls. The dry air no doubt has helped, and luckily no barbarisms have been vented on it. It is a noble city, dead, but full of living memories, peopled now only by phantoms and by wild birds and beasts; the winding road up to its entrance from Agra is dotted with wild peacocks.

The great Akbar's tomb was not, as one might suppose, here, but about six miles out of Agra, on the opposite side, in yet another garden of enormous size, with high walls two miles round its four sides, in the middle of each of which is a lofty gateway, at each corner a minaret, and in the centre the mausoleum itself. It is a four-storied building, three of red standstone and the fourth of white marble, on the top of which is the tomb, or monument, reached by seemingly endless flights of very perpendicular steps. This is set in the middle of

the platform, open to the sky, and, contrary to the usual Mohammedan custom, the head is turned to the East, and not to Mecca—the latter place from this standpoint is, of course, West. The real burial place is, as usual, in the lower part, below the ground floor: down the sloping incline, into it, two men lighted me with large lanterns—an eerie proceeding, similar to what took place at the Egyptian graves—it is a peculiar notion to have the tomb below, and then much higher up the replica of it. The top cover precious stones once decorated, but they were taken by that great robber, the Rajah of Bharatpur. It is exquisitely carved all over, and surrounded by a cloister, as it were, of elegant lattice-work in marble. I'm quite sure this lovely tracery could only be done by Orientals, for the patience required to do this minute work is only found in the East. Should one call it patience, though?—rather disregard of time. Really, to see some of the natives squatting on the ground, with their arms resting on their knees, which are on a level with their chins, and with heads hanging down in the same position for hours at a time, one wonders if they know what time is, and what they think about (if they think at all), or what problem they can be turning over in their minds. The view from the top of this mausoleum is very extensive, overlooking gardens with their lovely palms and lettekh trees, in whose branches huge monkeys revel. The day I was there a monkey had gone beyond the gardens on a little tour of his own, and was sitting on the high mud

wall round the native village, with a tail about two yards long hanging down—a regular monarch of all he surveyed.

Agra is quite a large city, the native part, as usual apart from the cantonments, being most interesting.

"I remember stopping by the way: To watch a potter thumping his wet clay" (*Omar Khayyam*). This I literally experienced one day while driving in the native part. He was squatting before the same shaped wheels of stone, turning with his foot, and shaping vessels with his hands, in the same manner as potters may have done for a thousand or so of years. These vessels for their food and for cooking are then placed in the sun to dry. I got out to snap the group; the children seemed interested, but the old man simply looked up, and perhaps wondered what sort of a mad Memsahib I was. But these Indians did not resent my intrusion with the camera as the Mohammedans might have done.

Bargaining for precious stones was very amusing. In one of their native shops, one morning, I was asked to sit on a kind of flat table, about eighteen inches high, covered with white—more like a small platform than anything else, it appeared to me. Then one man squatted down, and gravely unfolded small packets of various stones; five others squatted round to look on, and give their advice and opinion as well. To have emeralds and rubies worth a fortune shown to one in that dirty little shop was a sharp contrast between wealth and squalor.

The Potter at his Wheel. Agra.

It was really very funny. At first they think they have got a rare chance; from a white Memsahib alone they can ask any price they like, but a few remarks of "how much a carat" and a request to weigh the stones, shows them that one knows something about it, and the price then becomes more reasonable. I say more, because to buy anything successfully in India you must offer about a tenth of what is asked; you can then rise a bit to meet their price. But you must not buy it the first time; if you can go back every day or so for a week you may get the article at your own price. The shopkeepers are always most anxious to show you everything they have, especially in what I call the ultra native bazaars; and it is surprising what lovely things are to be found in what seem to us quite mean and dirtly little places. At the back of one shop, on a verandah, I was shewn some men and boys doing most marvellous embroidery on silk and satins for ladies' dresses. This embroidery is worked on frames, and the delicate fabrics are kept perfectly clean. Peacocks form a very favourite design, with the eyes and the tail picked out in jewels. Quite tiny boys are able to do something, even if only to roll up thread. As for the Chikan work, as the white muslin embroidery is called, it is quite extraordinary how their eyesight stands such fine stitches. One man was repairing a bit of white muslin, and I was asked to look if I could see where his work had been, but quite failed to do so. It appeared as if each thread of this fine muslin was picked up. And as for the paintings on ivory,

one would think it impossible—that it must be photography—but I saw a native artist working at some ivory paintings, and he had several of the same design in front of him, and would put a touch on each one in rotation, so that it might dry before he touched another part. This industry, as most others, seems to be kept in a family, as several of them, when I asked if they had done it themselves, would say, "I paint, and my father, and my grandfather!"

This fine work, which one associates chiefly with a woman's brain, is never thought of for women. They are only the beasts of burden! One sees them carrying great weights on their heads, and at the same time balancing a tiny child across the hip. The little things seem quite content to sit that way, and must stick on by the force of gravitation, or magnetic attraction! The coloured turbans in Agra are very conspicuous, pink and mauve and a pale green being quite favourite colours. I saw many turbans being ironed in the streets, the feat being accomplished by two men holding them out, one at each end (the turbans really looked like curtains), a third man was running up and down—you must remember it is nine yards of length—with a hot implement—that is the only word for the bulky thing which was the iron.

Kite-flying is a great sport there—everyone does it—and you constantly see these minute "aeroplanes" up aloft. They say it requires skill to get them to rise, and I quite believe it, for there was hardly a breath of wind. The cotton is rubbed

with very fine glass, and then the objective is to cut your neighbour's string by your own kite, and as the string is tremendously long, plenty of manœuvring is required.

One evening I was walking along the Mall, and to my astonishment I saw men and boys running in the compounds, over the walls and across the road, and over into the next gardens, one after the other, like a "paper-chase," all in the greatest excitement to see if the kite would drop. Till I saw the reason, I thought at least they must be chasing a robber, and for a moment considered if I had not better retrace my steps. There are large colleges in Agra, where the students seem to indulge in exercise for the body as well as the mind, for tennis courts are always to be found. The sight of Eurasians, parti-clad in European coat or shirt, and native white skirt, with bare feet, playing a really good game, is very entertaining.

A great feature here is the quantity of green parakeets, which flit across from tree to tree with a chuckling kind of note. It is only when they are flying that one can distinguish them from the green leaves. The blue jay is also another joy to behold, especially when it is flying; the outspread wings shine most radiantly; while the soft whistling note of the golden eagle is musical and soothing.

The garden of the Cecil Hotel is a paradise of flowers. Such hedges and hedges of hollyhocks of lovely shades, rows and rows of sweet peas, masses of poppies, roses and other flowers, made it always a joy when walking to and from the sleeping

quarters to the feeding part. I had my bedroom right at the end of one block, with a window overlooking the field or compound, where at night jackals would come and make their unearthly yells. Hyænas have been known to visit it and laugh at the sleepers, and one day I saw a huge porcupine, trapped, because he was making too good a meal off the young vegetables which were grown for the hotel use. As for the palm-squirrels, they were ubiquitous—such dear inquisitive little mortals, so quick in their movements, and so noisy in their talk. They would run up the door and in at the ventilator, just sampling your room. Lizards or geccos, too, were often running in and out. But what I disliked was the large open hole in one's bathroom, which is in all Indian hotels, through which the bath water was emptied. It was quite large enough for rats and snakes to come through, or even for a bigger creature. An American lady was discussing it with me one night, and said she would take my advice—which I never carried out myself—to stop it up at night. "Well," said she next morning, "I managed to block up that hole last night, but I don't know that I did it very effectually, I believe a bug could have got through." The "creepy-crawlies" and flying pests are a serious drawback to one's enjoyment. The native gardeners, called malis—pronounced something like "Molly"—are generally very skilful with flowers. They were always at work with skins of water on their backs, watering or weeding; in the middle of the day they invariably went to

sleep, somewhere or other, in the shade. Having the separate blocks in the hotels does away with lifts and stairs; sometimes there are two storeys, but not often. You can drive up in the ticca gharry to your bedroom door, and so do not have to carry, from the front door across the compound, your bag, your camera, your parasol, your inevitable guide-book, and the hundred and one impedimenta which always accumulate.

In Agra there is a very long bridge across the Jumna, over which one has to go to some of the tombs; it is so narrow that with difficulty two carriages pass; and as it is more or less always full of bullock-waggons carting green-stuff, or sacks of grain, etc., one's progress over it is distinctly slow. Sometimes the drivers of the gharries get very impatient, and fling strong remarks and epithets to the blockers: "Son of a pig" is a favourite, and "Your sister is married to the son of a pig" another, and so on—though why the female relatives should always be drawn in for uncomplimentary remarks is strange. But, then, the women are, of course, so despised; not that they look so, for they walk in the most dignified and lordly fashion, due to so often carrying things on their heads, and the tinkly-jingle of their anklets is most musical. So slightingly do the Indians think of women, that if ever there is female suffrage in England, one wonders how it will affect India. The natives there will not care much about obeying laws if they know a woman has had a vote towards getting those into power who passed it. Such far-

reaching effect will our turbulent females in England cause.

The women are very fond of voluminous skirts of brilliant colours, which really do not look garish, particularly when a white sari is worn over head and shoulders. The sari—a kind of shawl—is a very important item in an Indian lady's attire. Sometimes one special colour is used when the wearer is in one particular mood; again, another—sometimes the saris are plain, sometimes embroidered—as much as £200 can be given for a single one, and most women have quite a number. One Indian lady on board ship appeared in a fresh one nearly every day. There is a particularly fine English Church in Agra, the regimental one. Service in the churches out there seems so strange, with windows, which are practically doorways, coming right down to the ground, all open, and perhaps those on the sunny side having the green venetian shutters closed. It struck me there as somewhat peculiar for us to be insisting on the Fourth Commandment on Sunday inside, while outside the church the mali was raking up the grass and watering the flowers!

The little ekkas, or "one-horse shay," something like a small four-post bedstead, are very numerous. They have a flat board high above the wheels, and on this squat the passengers, sometimes as many as four, which appears a tight fit, and it means a fair amount of arranging of legs to get up and settle themselves. On the outskirts of Agra quite good sport of big-game shooting is available;

deer, hyænas, leopards, etc., and peacocks are plentiful, though the latter is a sacred bird to the Hindus. The natives there all seemed very orderly, and when we arrived late one night, hardly a creature was to be seen on the way from the station, and all the houses, or hovels I might say, were quite dark and and shut up—of course, I mean through the native parts. Talking of that reminds me that I found it somewhat eerie being driven from the station so late at night. Imdad was in another carriage with the luggage, and my friend and I hadn't naturally the least notion where we were being taken.

I was sorry to leave Agra, with its history, its architectural glories, its beautiful gardens, its wide and slowly winding river, its ever radiant sunshine and moonshine—yes, even its native quarters, with their thoroughly interesting people!

CHAPTER XVII.

DELHI.

DELHI ought to have been visited before Agra, for it is a most disappointing place in some ways, though its ruins are, of course, deeply interesting. The new capital will be the eighth one, but I pity the Government people who will have to live in it instead of in Calcutta. It is unhealthy, dirty, and a peculiar smell hangs over it all the time. It is not half so nice a place as Agra to live in, putting on one side the joy of living near the Taj! being much more native, for one thing, and that means dirt and smells *ad lib.* The intuition of the blacks is quite marvellous. I had wired to the Cecil Hotel to say I was coming, and on arriving there late at night, somewhere about ten o'clock, amidst a huge crowd of people, Europeans as well as "Chocolates," a native servant danced up to me, flourishing an envelope in his hand with my name on it! How did he spot me as being the one he was to meet and conduct to the hotel? It quite took the wind out of Imdad's sails, as he was, of course, very important getting a gharry and the luggage on it. Really, that station was a perfect Bedlam that night, but the Indians always have so very much to say when they are travelling—and they do not speak *sotto voce* either. The new incarnation will have

The Chandni Chowk, Delhi.

to be a complete new city, for there is nothing to satisfy mere Europeans; those who now live there tolerate it, and that's all. Still, it is Delhi the inscrutable, the heart of India, and as every Asiatic knows, "Who holds Delhi, holds India."

The chief street is the famous Chandni Chauk, fairly wide, with a row of banyan trees down the middle, under the shade of whose branches cows lie or goats browse withered leaves, children gather or men loiter. The shops on either side are miserable hovels, propping each other up, with once blue or white painted walls, all dirty now; with the mixture of goods displayed for sale, sometimes behind a window, more often in the open; and yet here, in this filthy street, are men who can put their hands on the finest jewels in India. If you go inside the shops you can see exquisite unset stones worth thousands of rupees a carat; these they will show you quite unconcernedly, carefully unwrapping the bits of paper they keep them in. In the same shop you may see imitation things, perhaps made in Birmingham! But if they think you really know stones, they will show you perfect treasures. I remember I was buying something in one of these shops, and would not give the price asked, though I much coveted the article, and after I had got into the gharry I sent Imdad back to ask if they would come down, and they ran out with it, only too willing at the last minute, evidently quite expecting me to go back, and prepared to sell at my price. Of course, it is a bad system; for those who do not know how to bargain are

simply rooked. I met one Russian lady who said she couldn't bargain; she always gave them what they asked! As I saw one day a bead chain bought for 2/6, for which at first the man asked 15/-, it shews what profits they get from some people. They openly say they have the "asking price," the "real price," and the "lasta" price, and the shopkeepers do not hesitate to run down their neighbours' wares as a means of puffing up their own.

Traces of the Durbar were to be seen in the bare baked plain of the Maidan, where the tents had just been taken up. These were visitors' tents, the great plain of the Durbar itself being still covered with tents. It is some miles out of Delhi, and equally some miles in circumference, so that it was only those who were in a princely, or Government party, who saw the whole of it. Imdad had been bearer to an English gentleman there, and from the Ridge, and also when I was driving close by, he could not resist repeating all the time, "That was *my* camp," "That was so-and-so's, that so-and-so's," etc., and "This was *my* camp." The Ridge is very rugged, mostly covered with scrub, where jackals hide in the day-time. I disturbed one or two, and they slank off with their tails drooping like chidden dogs. The Mutiny Memorial, put up there, is very commonplace; probably elsewhere it might be thought a fine thing, but after seeing all the old and beautiful architecture, this modern thing "kicks." It is out beyond where the new capital will have to be built, and

soon there will be forests of scaffolding of those funny bamboo poles, which look much too thin and light to bear any weight—to say nothing of the crookedness of them—and yet they are always used for building in the East. Near the Memorial is a curious stone pillar—the Asoka—said to be more than 2,000 years old. An inscription on the base of it reads as follows :—" This pillar was originally erected at Meerut, in the third century B.C., by King Asoka. It was removed thence and set up in the Koshuk Shika Palace, near this, by the Emperor Firarshah, A.D. 1358; thrown down and broken into five pieces by the explosion of a powder magazine, A.D. 1713-1719. It was restored and set up in this place by the British Government A.D. 1867."

It is a very lonesome spot, but one gets good views of the plain on both sides for an immense distance. The Jumna Musjid, one of the famous Moghul Mosques of India, is one of the finest in the world, built of white marble and red sandstone. It has enormously high flights of steps on three sides leading up to three very elaborate gateways. These steps are of great width, so that they make quite a feature; standing as it does on this height, the building has a most imposing effect. On the top of the gateways are galleries, surmounted by marble domes and lofty gold-tipped spires. Inside is a huge quadrangle, and in the centre the inevitable fountains. Here, of course, one has to put on babooshes over one's boots, and then one can go through the mosque. It is under Government care, and is the national or metropolitan mosque for

Moslems in India; much as our St. Paul's is to us. In one corner of the quadrangle is a tiny mosque, where treasures of the Prophet are kept. Several disciples are clustered round, and want you to pay rupees for shewing them to you; but in the end a few annas given by Imdad suffice. These relics, which they beg you to come near to see, but which are preferable at a far (smelling) distance, are Mahomet's slipper, his footprint on a stone, and greatest of all, a hair of his beard in a silver casket. Also a very fine copy of the Koran, is shewn, one of the oldest known, dating about the seventh century. On Fridays and on High Festivals the large quadrangle is packed with people.

The gates of Delhi are not the least of its attractions. First, the Cashmere Gate, of Mutiny fame, which had an opening blown through by Lieutenants Home and Salkeld and three sergeants, and the gate shattered sufficiently to let in the English, and Delhi was once more in our hands. This is a picturesque old gateway; amongst the lively crowds that go through now, how many think or understand how those breaches came?

Then the magnificent Lahore Gate, which towers high above the entrance to the fort, built by Shah Jehan, is the fitting doorway to the great city *within* the city, for that is what it really is. Through this high gateway is an equally high vaulted arcade, now used for shops for the Tommies in the barracks within. Passing through this rather dark area you come straight out into the sunlight again, and enter the music gallery, and thus to the Diwan-i-am or

Hall of Public Audience. This building is open on three sides, supported by red pillars. The throne is reached by a staircase at the back, and all the walls are covered with mosaic work. The Diwan-i-Khas, or Hall of Private Audience, is an enchanting building of white marble, ornamented with gold, and the marble inlaid with precious stones forming flowers in most elegant designs; and here stood the famous Peacock throne of gold, inlaid with rubies, emeralds and diamonds, with two peacocks at the back with jewelled tails outspread, which was carried off to Teheran, in Persia, by Nadir Shah.

It is a dream of a place, and round the roof of this hall runs the fitting motto—"If there is a heaven upon earth, it is this, it is this, it is this"; and truly no other palace in the world contains such a gem. The symmetry of it, the delicate lightness of the architecture, of its cornices and lattices, treasures of green and mauve, and its pillars and pointed arches all inlaid with agate, cornelian, turquoise, and other precious stones, fitly earn it the motto.

There were gardens in this wonderful miniature city laid out with kiosks of white marble, after the Eastern plan, and with water running by them; and the harem courts occupied another great space, about 1,000 feet each way, from the great halls, with water running through for the wonderful baths, all in marble, and sunk in the floors. Anything that could be decorated is so done; no expense or trouble was spared by the Shah Jehan. Whatever he may have been as a ruler, he was past

master in planning these magnificent palaces; this one, Agra Fort, the Taj, and Fatepur Sikri—any one of these would have made him famous for ever. The Pearl Mosque and the Rang Mahal are also beautiful in their own style. From the public halls, one can look out on the river running just below the high walls. On a balcony leading out of the Diwan-i-Khas, King George and Queen Mary showed themselves to the enthusiastic crowds packed in the space below between the walls and the river. On the beautiful green swards they had a garden party at Durbar time. What a change of scene; and yet humans all over again as in the great Shah's time, with the same ambitions and passions, the same jealousies, the same loves and hates. The places and outward appearances may change, but human nature is a proof that "history repeats itself." All these places have been well cared for by Lord Curzon, to whom all honour is due for saving so many of these wonderful treasures. Prior to his time some of these lovely palaces were actually used for officers' quarters, and a friend told me her drawing-room was one of these halls!

The Delhi Gate, another huge entrance, has the famous elephants in front of it.

Close by the Maidan is a small park containing a monument to General Nicholson, and near by is the English church on the one side, with the cemetery on the other. It is most pathetic to see the number of tiny gravestones there for babies who have succumbed to the climate; they seem in number out of all proportion to the others.

I think I said that this new capital will be the eighth. First, there was old Indraprastha, of which no remains are to be found. Second, Firozabad, on the south of modern Delhi. Third, Indrapat of Humayan and Sha Shah, two miles south of modern Delhi. Fourth, Siri, now Shalpur, four miles south-west of Indrapat. Fifth, Jahanpanch, the space between Siri and Old Delhi, which eventually was walled in. Sixth, Old Delhi, the Delhi of the Pathans in the twelfth century, and which contains the Kutub Minar, about nineteen miles from modern Delhi. One sees nothing but masses of ruins everywhere—houses overturned, tombs despoiled, piles of stones here, fields spread with them there, and occasionally a magnificent building or tomb of a great man which has survived the wreck. The new capital will indeed be a Phœnix rising out of many ashes!

On the way to Old Delhi I visited Firozabad, the tomb of Nizam-ud-din-Aulign, rather off the high road, and a few yards further on is the Hall of Sixty-four Pillars, called Charsath Kamba, where Akbar's foster brother and his mother are buried. Then I went to Humayan's Tomb, a vast building in a very fair state of preservation; marble of white and grey, drab-coloured stone and red sandstone being mingled with great artistic taste. I here noticed, on the outer walls, inverted triangles. How did that Christian symbol come to be there? The lattice marble screens are very notable here, and are some of the very finest specimens; in fact, if the Taj had not been built, this might have ranked

as one of the finest mausoleums in the world. The central hall contains the tomb of Humayun, and it was there Hodson, of Hodson's Horse, dragged out the old Moghul King Bahadur Shah, who was hiding; and here, too, that he found his two sons secreted. Forcing his way into the crowd that surrounded the tomb, Hodson, accompanied by ten men only—a deed of daring which must be leniently considered in the light of the Cawnpore horrors, which had roused the English to revenge—disarmed a thousand rebels in the garden, took their arms from them, brought the princes through them to the Delhi Gate, and shot the latter with his own hand.

This tomb, like all the rest, has a garden round it, with a tiny canal of water leading from the gateway up to the foot of the high platform on which it stands. In the village of the same name is yet another shrine, the Dargat of Nizam-ud-din Alya, where is the grave of the poet Khusu, who died 1315. It is one of the chief places of Mohammedan veneration in India. The legend of this place is, that Shah Tughlak insisted on the workmen of the saint finishing his new fortress and city. The saint therefore worked at the tank by night, by means of oil lights. When the King found this out, he forbade the sale of oil to him, but by the prayers of the saint the workmen were able to work with light miraculously supplied by the water of the tank. Wrathfully, the King cursed the water, so that it became bitter, and the saint returned the compliment by cursing the city

of Taghlakabad. This tank is surrounded by galleries and cloisters and a high temple, from the roof of which natives will dive, or more correctly speaking jump, down fifty feet into the tank for backsheesh—"Four annas a man," said Imdad; "no more, and only one man." Evidently he thought we need not see all who were waiting for a job.

The saint's tomb is close by, in a cool shadowy place, the door being a massive brass one highly ornamented; and close by is the tomb of Jehanara, the daughter of Shah Jehan, who kept faithful to him during his captivity in Agra Fort. It is narrow, and the marble is hollowed out, and grass was growing on the top in accordance with her wishes. On a headstone at the side is written:—

"He is above everliving and everlasting.
Let nothing but green grass cover my tomb,
For it is the best gravecloth of poor in spirit
The humble and mortal Jehanara Begum,
Daughter of Emperor Shah Jehan Badalah
Ghazi."

Many others of royal note are buried in these precincts; one, that of Mirza Jehangir, on a higher level, reached by a few steps, has the most beautiful carved white marble door I have ever seen. Both sides are ornamented, and it is in excellent preservation—in fact, still absolutely perfect. This place was a delightful spot; the tall building of the galleries made a welcome shade from the burning sun, and the quaint simplicity of the Jehanara's grass grave was a soothing spot for one's eyes to rest on.

From here to the Kutub, about eleven miles from Delhi, did not take long in the car, which vehicle seemed out of place; one ought to have visited it on a camel or in a bullock cart! Many of the latter did we meet on the way, with their drivers wrapped in blankets, lying asleep in the middle of the cart, and the patient bullocks keeping out of the way of my car in the most extraordinary manner—luckily for them and for me!

Here the great tower of victory, and triumph of Moslem art, soars 240 feet into the sky in a series of five balconied stories. The three lower are of red sandstone, and the upper of white marble, having texts from the Koran written round the second storey. The decoration is very singular. The lower storey has flutings, round and angular alternately; the next storey only rounded ones; the third angular ones, and the Arabic decorations on it make a suitable embellishment. A cupola on the top, of modern make, was thrown down by an earthquake in 1803. It is marvellous to think that the whole of it has never been overthrown, considering it is in the earthquake zone.

This monument, counted as one of the wonders of the world, is in the court of the Mosque of Kutub al Islam, built by one of the three kings, who concentrated their efforts here previous to the Moghul conquest of India; they were Ud-din-Aibak, Ud-din-Altamash, and Ala-ud-din. Circa, 1191 to 1315 A.D.

All the buildings are splendid ruins; two arches of lofty height tower up to the sky, the stonework

Mosque at Kutub Minar, Delhi.

one mass of carved tracery. An inscription over the inner arch says that it was begun after the capture of Delhi in 1191 A.D. On one side of the building is a forest of magnificent pillars of Hindu architecture; it is not quite clear if they now stand as originally placed, or whether they have been re-arranged by Moslems. They are all carved, and each one has a different design. The cloister idea is carried out here to a great extent: would the Saracens be the connecting link between the idea of cloisters in Europe and here? Another part has glorious arches, a regular range of them about 380 feet long; and the carving on all these—pillars, arches, gates, walls—is the most gorgeous specimen of its class known in any part of the world.

There is yet another tomb in this cluster of buildings, a choice little structure about 44 feet square, the interior profusely carved. In and round the windows of these places greenery was abundant, trees and shrubs rioting luxuriously, and lending a charming touch of Nature to the wonderful display of art. In front of one of the high arches is the Iron Pillar. This is a solid mass of wrought iron 23 feet 8 inches high, and 16 inches in diameter, dating from the fourth or fifth century A.D. The capital is of Persian form, with the amalaka moulding, which is the sign of great antiquity. There is an inscription on it, but no date, saying it was dedicated to Vishnu, and it probably had on it the figure of Sarada, but this the Mahommedans would, of course, remove. Undoubtedly it is of Hindu origin, and the size

of it, amongst such high buildings and not far from the Kutub Minar itself, tends to accentuate its unique position. It is of pure malleable iron without any alloy, having been tested by the Indian School of Mines. It was pleasant to get into the shade of some of these beautiful arches away from the burning sun, and to sit and dream what it looked like when it was peopled, and was not the deserted oasis it is to-day.

Driving back to Delhi, one passed such quantities of ruins that the whole place seems "a cemetery of cities."

How beautiful the designs of the Eastern buildings are! They seem to express so much of refinement and artistic taste which it is our English vaunt that we possess by right of education; but think of some of our new buildings put up in England of late years! With all these beautiful models to go upon, why should such hideous things be erected as the new Westminster Cathedral, for instance, or the Shakespeare Memorial at Stratford-on-Avon, when in these days of photography every bit of design may be delineated and given as a pattern?

The caste marks among the natives of Delhi are very pronounced, and varied in design, according to their rank. The Hindus are frightfully encumbered by their caste regulations. They lose caste if they even drink out of any vessel that has been used or even touched by an unbeliever, and through fear of so doing one sees them at the stations holding out both hands for the man with the water skin,

or pail, or bowl, to pour water into their palms, and then they manage to drink it up. A doctor told me that in hospital the patients will only take medicine by having it poured into their hands, and they never spill a drop. The hospitals must be trials for the patients! When they get better they just squat on the side of the bed, instead of sitting on it; and what with their food being cooked by unbelievers, and having to eat at the same time as others, they must endure a great deal of misery.

The marriage question is a vexed one amongst Hindus as well as amongst English! Here they can only marry into their own caste, and sometimes there may not be "enough to go round"; so a father has often to make a very large dowry before he can get his daughters married. Even a "failed B.A." commands a good price, and a full B.A. quite a high one. Then the marriage festivals are so important that it often takes almost all a man has to give his daughter a good "send-off"; so it frequently happens that the girl babies are conveniently delicate, and do not manage to outlive infancy! There is, however, not abject poverty in India, as every family supports its own relations. The parent always lives in the house of the young married people, and the bride has to be under the mother-in-law, who, more often than not, is most arbitrary.

One palace I was shewn where grandfather, grandmother, uncles and aunts, brothers and sisters innumerable, were all in residence. In poor families the women never eat in the presence of

their menkind. Many of them are still very purdah; in some parts a sari over the head and face is all they wear, but in others, Delhi and surrounding parts, they shroud themselves in an enormous cover of white, with little slits for eyes, literally eyelet holes. What the heat must be inside these "burkas" it is easy to imagine. In India, especially in the large cities, what struck me at first was the number of natives always in the streets, what in Europe we should call the poorer classes; yet they do not seem abjectly destitute, though their houses are often of the most wretched description—a bare room with a dung-dried floor, no bed, of course, nor any comfort of the sort, which would be a European's first thought. The woven mat straw mattress on four legs, called the charpoy, is generally outside the door, or more usually than not, the natives sleep on a rug or sheet in the house if cool; if not, in the gutter, on the footpaths, on the road—all are equally agreeable to him, and it is extraordinary to see how they do sleep amidst noise and traffic and hubbub. In the hotels, with people passing all the time along the corridors, one sees the bearers fast asleep on their sheets on the floor. One wonders sometimes if they ever do any toilet! Certainly in Colombo one morning, when we were making a very early start, I saw one "boy" changing a shirt; but when do they do any washing? Only before their religious observances, I presume, except that certainly at odd times one does often see a Hindu doing *something* with water!—squatting near a water tap washing his

face and hands and feet in about a pint of water, or at a station, squatting on the platform, rinsing out his mouth with much spluttering and rubbing of teeth with a bit of cane. Without a doubt they drink a lot of water; naturally the heat makes the natives thirsty, as well as the poor white people. I once saw a water-carrier going round to the clerks in a bank giving them a drink.

A bank, by the way, is a funny mixture of East and West, of rigid discipline and order and casual —anyhow—ways! In one, at Agra, was the usual smart European counter, with its gilt wired "fence" on it, clerks sitting behind, further back still small tables, where the heads presided in dignified isolation; and in the one corner by the door at which people entered was a kind of raised platform, on which squatted—without chair or stool—a native clerk, who doled out rupees, rupee notes, and pice, even, from either heaps of silver, paper, or copper respectively, in exchange for the cheques. This particular bank was quite a palatial one in a huge compound, with flowers and lawns and a fine drive up to it, standing well away from the road. I suppose the banks are only for white people, except the rich natives, of course, for the poor people keep their bank on their persons, in the way of their bangles and anklets, and such like jewellery.

CHAPTER XVIII.

BOMBAY.

FROM Agra to Bombay was a very hot and wearisome journey of about thirty hours. The train waited and pottered many odd times, and most contrarily did not wait at any place at a decent hour for meals. I remember at breakfast time we thought it would never arrive at a station so that we could get out to the restaurant car. Eventually it drew up on the line, and we flung ourselves out of the compartment yelling for Imdad to go and take care of our carriage, and ran along the line to the car. More yells of "Quo hai!" "Quo hai!" for them to open the door, in terror that the train might go on and leave us lamenting on the line. A head looked out at the end, nodded to us, but the door didn't open, and in despair we climbed up (and it *was* a climb!) and flung ourselves against the door, to find it, by happy chance, unfastened. I cannot say that meals in the Indian trains are all one could desire; there is a good supply of ice, which is a good thing. We got it several times, and put it in empty biscuit tins to cool the ever-wanted Perrier water. It certainly reduced the heat a little; but as for being cold!—even the biscuits out of the tins seemed just fresh from the oven, and the fruit was hot too.

The country was very uninteresting till we neared Bombay, where the hills are fairly high of the "trap" rock strata, which gives them the peculiar flat top and precipitous sides, and where more jungle is found. Bombay itself is very picturesque, lying in the curve of the bay; and the hills rising up at the back give it, from the sea, a charming appearance. I have heard that some people think it best seen from the stern of a home-going steamer. The harbour, lying in the shelter of the islands, quietly reflects the sunlight; innumerable little yachts flit about; several big steamers, perhaps, lie at anchor, or large yachts with their pennons float idly in the faint breeze.

As in other cities, the modern and European quarter is quite close to the native quarter; so that you may go from one quite fine and imposing street, with palatial shops, to the little boxes of the natives. In the latter they have a certain amount of method, for one street will contain all brass utensils; another embroideries; a third fruit, vegetables and foods; and so on. One sees all types and nationalities in Bombay; all roads, they say, "lead to Rome," and all roads in India must lead to Bombay; for Pathans, Parsees, Armenians, Arabs, Mussulmen, Goanese, Madrasis, Punjabis, Mahrattas, mingle in the crowds; and one thing about these crowds is, they never mind how closely they are squeezed up together—you can get more Indians packed into a certain number of square feet than you can white people; even in the trains they are content, apparently, to be packed into horse-box-looking

compartments as closely as you can imagine. In ekkas, too, it is a common sight to see four or five squatting on it, almost on the top of one another.

Malabar Hill is the great residential quarter, and it formerly was almost exclusively for English people; but now the native gentleman, having amassed a good fortune, perhaps, in the little box in the native bazaar, thinks he will like to live in his own house on Malabar Hill, so that the Parsee element is strongly gaining all the best houses there. They live in great style; in fact, it is getting a recognised thing now, that these rich Indians are coming to the front with great strength and keeping the motto, "India for the Indians," gradually pushing out the English! The rich Parsee may come to London and invite smart society to his house, and his hospitality is readily accepted; but in Bombay he may not enter the clubs, and is not "visited." The wealth of Bombay is largely in the hands of this sect, who make East and West meet without mixing. They will wear European clothes, but still stick to their peculiar form of hat—a high mitre-shape of shiny black oilskin, extremely narrow, and affording no shade at all. This shape, like a cow's hoof, was first adopted as a sign of subjection and conformity to the Brahmins when they first came from Persia.

The Parsee ladies do not keep purdah, but generally wear native dress. This sect have their Towers of Silence for disposal of their dead in the middle of Malabar Hill, a very extensive place built in a large space of ground surrounded by palms and

leafy trees, on which perch the hordes of vultures always on the watch to see their next meal being brought up the approach.

There is a large Jain temple on Malabar Hill, the Walkeshah, to which pilgrims from all over India come, and may often be seen with their staves and water bottles, being about all the luggage they require, something after the fashion of an old gentleman in England who turned up to stay the night at a friend's house for a rubber of whist, and during the game said, "Oh, I might have put my luggage in my room," at the same time putting down on the table a comb and a tooth-brush!

The Yacht Club on the Apollo Bund is the chief meeting place in the evenings for tea and bridge. Friday is the great afternoon, because of the English mail-boat arrival, when everybody who has a friend in Bombay is taken there to tea, and all are sitting out on the lawns, or leaning over the wall close on to the water, listening to the English military band. That particular afternoon it was the Warwickshires, looking delightfully cool in their white drill uniforms. One could hardly find a more enjoyable way of passing an hour or two than at the Yacht Club, which is essentially English, not a trace of the gentleman of colour allowed.

It is a strange problem this of colour. In England the Indian is received, fêted, even married by girls whose people should know better, and then, forsooth, as soon as they arrive in Bombay they are not allowed even in the clubs! They may have a slight veneer of Western customs and education, but

directly they set foot on their native soil race will tell, and they invariably revert to former habits in their homes, and dress, and manners. It is most extraordinary how the slightest trace of colour, even two annas to the rupee, is enough to handicap a man—or woman for that matter—not only in society, but in any business appointment. They make good enough subordinates; but as heads, or leaders, generally fail.

Bombay, as may easily be understood, being the gateway of India, is a cosmopolitan city, and is a regular meeting-place for old friends, some perhaps going home for the hot weather, others coming out—flotsam and jetsam. The departure of the home-going steamer is always a day of excitement; tenders going backwards and forwards crowded with passengers, who have first to pass a medical inspection by a lady doctor in a funny little wooden shed. It is all very well, but merely a matter of form, as may be judged from the fact that two days out at sea a case of plague occurred amongst the Lascars on our ship, and one died in four hours. Naturally the unpleasant fact was not proclaimed; but news travels quickly on board ship, especially when strong odours of disinfectants arise; besides, some people noticed strange powdery stuff in their cabins, and when bedding was seen being thrown overboard tongues wagged very freely. Fortunately, there was not an outbreak of it; but we were quarantined at Aden, and at Suez. At the latter place a great to-do was made; all the Lascars were shipped off in large barges in charge of some of the stewards,

Lascars arriving after disinfection at Suez.

presumably to a shed to be fumigated, and the local authorities came on board with barrels of disinfectants and hose pipes, etc., etc.; also another nice lady doctor—English—assisted by a foreigner—Egyptian or Turk—inspected the passengers. We were all much afraid we should be still tied up at Port Said, but the time was just up an hour or so before our arrival, so we were able to go ashore and stretch our legs. Port Said wakes up when a boat comes in; the shops invite you in; the street-sellers of feathers, sherbet, beads, etc., ply a busy trade; so do the fortune-tellers and conjurors!

Soon after leaving the "Waters of the Nile" one feels a cold snap in the air, and realises that one has said "Good-bye" to the glorious East, and that Europe is not yet in her summer mood; and one very regretfully becomes alive to the fact that the splendid time is ended; one returns with the feeling that wonderful India has gripped one, and that one must see more of it; in fact, if you've "'eard the East a-calling you won't never 'eed naught else."

CHAPTER XIX.

BURMA.

BEFORE leaving India, a side trip to Burma was very tempting, and, having been decided upon, a voyage across the Bay of Bengal was found quite interesting in many ways, amusement beginning, first of all, at the Outram Ghat. One cannot start anywhere in India without the greatest excitement with the natives; such shoutings and squealings and pantings, frantic rushes, and gesticulations. "The British India" is the chief line, and in about fifty hours Rangoon was reached. On arriving at the landing-place some Buddhist priests on board were met by local dignitaries, who "shikoh'd" them well, even touching the ground with their foreheads in their devotion. Some of them were the nuns or priestesses, so it leads one to imagine that priests in Burma were as much worshipped as they are in little country towns in England by the fair ladies of the parish! Until quite recently the punghi or priests used to carry a palm-leaf as a fan to shield themselves from the glances of women; but the leaf is not so much used now in Burma—are the punghis more ascetic, or are the women not so attractive? Rangoon is well known as a fairly hot place, the

Breakfast in the Shwe Dagon Pagoda, Rangoon.

most delightful times of the day being early morning or late evening, when the "breeze" gets up. This breeze is anxiously waited for after the enervating heat of the day, and is, I think, only noticed by the inhabitants, for I quite failed to appreciate its cooling breath, though my friends kept saying, "Now it's come; don't you feel it?" but I could not perceive even a leaf moving in the hot and shimmering air.

The great social centres in Rangoon are the Boat Club and the Gymkhana Club. The former, on the lake, is much patronised in the late afternoon, when people go in punts, and lazily drift round to Scandal Point, where the band plays; those who like more active exercise ride up and down the park drives, by the water's edge. To watch the gorgeous sunset, the golden top of the Shwe Dagon Pagoda gleaming in its crimson rays, and the reflection of the canoes on the water; to listen to the rippling sound of the punts gently swishing through the water and the distant strains of the band, make a very enjoyable way of spending one's evening hour. A more strenuous way is to go to the Gymkhana Club, where dancing is indulged in between tea and dinner, though to do this in high frocks and day suits argues great devotion to Terpsichore.

The Shwe Dagon Pagoda is, of course, the centre of attraction in Rangoon. Traditions says that nearly 600 years before Christ two merchants who were travelling to Bengal with rice, came upon Buddha meditating; he gave them in return for

their worship, four hairs of his head, and told the men to bury them in the Thein Got Tara Hill, where they would find a takoon, or oil tree, lying on the ground. After a long search they found the place, and buried the hairs in a golden box; and this was the first beginning of the pagoda of Takoon or Dagon. The pagoda is built on a large natural platform or mound cut in two terraces, one above the other, the top one (which is levelled) being 166 feet above the base; from which the pagoda rises to a height greater than that of St. Paul's Cathedral. Two-thirds from the top are covered with pure gold, and once in every twenty-five years this is renewed by public subscription. I was told by a resident that, when the top was thrown down a few years ago by an earthquake, a large cauldron was kept boiling for many weeks on the platform, and everyone cast in offerings of gold, either coins of some sort or ornaments. The coins would probably be English sovereigns, as the Burmans take them in circulation, and in the bazaars at Mandalay you may see them for sale in quantities in little glass-covered boxes, the price being 8 annas, *i.e.*, 8d., above face value! The golden centre of the pagoda is cone-like in shape, tapering towards the top, which is surmounted by a Hti or umbrella, almost invisible to the naked eye, but which is in reality a canopy of iron 13½ feet in diameter and 47 feet in height. Round this are hung fifteen hundred bells, one hundred being of gold, the others of silver, but it is impossible to distinguish them. The vane contains over 3,000 rubies and 500

Entrance to Shwe Dagon Pagoda, Rangoon.

emeralds and diamonds. Such wealth seems wasted so far up out of sight, but one cannot help admiring the zeal of the givers, though it may have had a selfish motive—that of acquiring merit.

The chief entrance is from the south. A flight of steps leads up from the road, down one side of which (especially in early morning) numbers of girls and women sit and sell blossoms for the worshippers—lovely white flowers, frangipannis, lotus, lilies, and coloured ones—some with stalks, others with the heads cut off and laid on a little tray. At the foot of this flight stand on either side huge griffons, or leo-gryphs as they are called—"chinkie" is the native word for them—a lion's head and a griffon's body, a most imaginative mixture, which is the recognised pagoda guardian everywhere. Passing up these, one comes to a covered archway, where more flowers are sold, as well as candles and joss sticks for burning. Then looking upwards, under an arch of wonderful carving, is yet another staircase, across which the sun falls in bright gleams, lighting up the colours of the silk lungis, as the people passed up and down, like the colours of a prism. A more charming picture could hardly be imagined; the constant movement and the play of colour were absolutely fascinating.

The stairs are awkward to mount, very steep, just not wide enough for two steps and yet too wide for one; many are much worn, which is wonderful, considering that all, save Europeans, are ordered to take off their footwear before going up them.

Again one comes to a flat space; and here are all kinds of stalls, where candles made in varied colours and shapes are sold, as well as paper fancies (which are hung up at shrines), joss-sticks, cigars, and the quaint triangular gongs, which the girls hit with a bit of wood and twirl round to show off their sound. They are usually made of very excellent bell metal, and give a most splendid resonance; indeed, one heard more from these "tinkly temple bells" than from those on the top of the pagoda! There were some repairs going on in this part, and we had to make a *détour* at the side, and so got a closer view of the people, who seemed practically to live there, to judge by the toilets being carried on, the cooking over braziers, and the lounging about of the men. Right up at the top one comes to all the smaller pagodas or shrines which surround the large base. The front one, opposite the staircase, is generally a favourite one for the devout; a huge figure of Buddha is sitting inside, and all round candles are burning, stuck on stands, the floor, the edge of a pillar, anywhere—it reminded one of the votive offerings of candles in the Roman Church. In front of the Buddha, in the very early morning, I saw lots of people "saying their prayers"—shikohing on their knees with a bunch of flowers held between their hands, and the inevitable cigar laid down by their side; but I have occasionally seen one in the mouth of a devotee whilst praying! Should one say praying or praising—as the chief object of the Buddhists is to adore? Now it appears a veritable town of shrines. One can wander all round, in

and out of side ones, some with most comical figures and decorations—even a whiskey bottle depicted—grotesque figures, umbrellas, elephants, etc.; and always Buddha sitting in his inner shrine, looking complacently at the worshippers with his vacant smile. Buddhas big and Buddhas little, there are hundreds of them on this platform; enormous reclining ones are also to be seen. The punghis are much to the fore, and the nuns also; but what makes it so peculiar are the little stalls all round, their owners selling flowers, ornaments, fruit, grains, etc.—even curiosities may be bought.

On the right-hand side one comes unexpectedly to a quiet corner, where under the shade of the banyan and betel trees are the graves of some of our officers and men who fell in the storming of the pagoda.

What an extraordinary place to rest in! Just away from the hum of the people is this little "campo santo," not kept in any very good order, but railed off from the natives.

Near this are high wooden platforms, to which one clambers up by a step or two. On these the pilgrims may rest and sleep by night on their mats till the Red Star, as they call the rising sun, appears, and calls them to devotion. There is a charmingly extensive view from this point, and it is a favourite place for meditation in the hot noontide, shaded as it is by the trees.

Close by, in the more open space, one morning about eight o'clock, I saw a group of Burmese women taking their morning meal, squatting on the

ground with their brass bowls full of "curry and rice." By the way, one always hears that expression in the East; never "rice and curry," the hard and fast phrase favoured in England. Who ever hears of butter and bread, or a soda and brandy! There are several bells hung on cross pieces of wood on special stands. They are peculiar in that they have no clappers, but are always struck by the worshippers with deers' antlers, first the bell and then the ground, to call attention to the "nats," or guardian spirits of the sky and earth, to witness their prayers.

One of the bells is one of the largest in the world; it is 7½ feet in diameter at the mouth, and 14 feet high. The tone would be very fine if properly swung, but the antlers do not call forth enough sound to do justice to the richness of the metal. This bell has the reputation of having a little of the supernatural about it. After the second Burmese War the English tried to carry it off to Calcutta, but it sank to the bottom of the river. Many attempts were made by our people to raise it, but in vain. Then the Burmans petitioned that, if they could do so, it might remain with them. At last they succeeded, and the bell now stands on the pagoda terrace. The devotees said they were helped by Buddha, as the appliances they had to work with were inferior to European ones.

Bells enter very much into the Buddhist religion. They are everywhere, except in a Burman's house —he would never use one for secular purposes—nor are they to be found in European houses there—

in that respect the Indian custom is followed If you want anything you shout for it, the idea being that a servant is always supposed to be in attendance, sitting outside the doorway. Often I have gone to call at friends' houses, and if the durwan is not there, one has to call out "Quo hai," or to walk in unceremoniously: a front-door bell is quite unknown.

In Burma the bells do not call the worshippers to any service, for of public worship there is none, each man being responsible to himself for his own state; their striking of bells individually is simply to announce the fact that the praise of Buddha has been made.

The carving of the roofs of the small pagodas or shrines is most elaborate, and is carried out with great detail. The shape is nearly always that of the lotus bud half opening. Several are placed one on the top of the other, diminishing in size towards the upper "stories," which are usually five or seven in number. In country places the pagodas are, of course, much simpler in shape, perhaps only like a cone.

There are very fair stores in Rangoon, where Europeans can get what they want, and, of course, there are besides endless native bazaars, with Chinese lanterns hanging in front to light up the stalls, which are hung round with a medley of articles for sale. The town is very cosmopolitan; varieties of races are constantly seen about—Tamils, Bengalis, Shans, Chinese, etc., etc., in great numbers. It has now become a very important

port; many rich natives live there, and European merchants are not far behind in accumulating wealth, if not merit! There is a large Anglican Cathedral, an enormous hospital, and recreation grounds where races and polo can take place. The streets are kept watered by a most primitive method: coolies carry across their shoulders long poles, suspended on the ends of which are large wooden buckets with long spouts, which, as the men run along, splash the water by jerks all over the road. Labour is plentiful, and so is time—why hurry?

Whilst in Rangoon I naturally wanted to see the "Hathis pilin' teak," as Kipling says; so one morning, about seven o'clock, we started for the timber yards to see the elephants working. Our pilgrimages were often weary ones, for the wretched gharries, which are like a box on wheels, with shutters instead of windows, rattled and bumped and creaked, till often one feared they would smash up: one kind piece of advice among the many given to us as "tenderfoots" was to hold on to the window opening, as the bottoms are apt to drop out! It was a long drive to the "yard," actually what we might call a field, where the river in flood left hundreds of trunks of trees, which had been rafted down from the jungle up country. These were now wanted at the machines to be cut up, the elephants were therefore employed in dragging and pushing them down to the creek, so that they might again be rafted into the yards proper. The dear animals were working hard, picking up enormous

The "Hathi pilin' Teak," Rangoon.

tree trunks, some of which must have been, by my rough measurement, more than nine feet in circumference and very long—practically the whole tall tree. These were attached to them by chains from a rude sort of harness round their shoulders, and then at a word from their mahout they would pull them along, pushing others out of the way with their trunks, and one big tusker I saw actually pushing one on in front of him by the root of his trunk. Sometimes they put their foot up to place them in a position to drag them better; so well do they understand their work that very little guidance is needed by the men—a few shouts seem all that is needed. They are knowing creatures; they refuse to work in the heat of the day, so only in early morning and late evening are they to be seen.

Elephants, I was told, feel the heat very much more than is supposed, and hard work in it knocks them over. Well, it is quite rational, when one knows they always sleep in the jungle during the daytime in their wild state, and are even known to "go up to the hills" during the hot weather!

CHAPTER XX.

ON THE ROAD TO MANDALAY.

RANGOON is only "on the road to Mandalay," so off we started for that delectable city, arriving after a twenty-two hours' journey—for being three hours late was a detail.

Travelling in Burma is not all joy and luxury. The carriages are fairly clean, but most uncomfortably planned for resting at night; no amount of pillows and cushions can make them easy. Notices are put up that a detective travels on the train from sunset to sunrise, and if a female in a first-class carriage is travelling by herself, she may be allowed to have her ayah in for the night from the third-class part. Some kind white person showed us how to fasten ourselves in at night, locking the door and fastening down the venetian shutter over the window securely, so that the window could not be pushed up and hands put in to open the door, in order that robbers might get in and help themselves to your goods. Oh, the scorching sun, the dust, the smells, the parched-up everything, of Mandalay in the month of February!

Still pagodas must be seen, and palaces of kings and queens visited; so after bumping along in still more bumpy gharries than Rangoon boasted of, we got to the hotel, and there found a victoria of sorts,

The Arakan Pagoda, Mandalay.

which was made, or supposed to be made, comfortable by smart loose cushions, but they only made one feel hotter still! The streets of the town are wide but very mean, the houses in the native quarter being extraordinary erections, always on pillars, underneath which pi-dogs crowd; and although many of these wretched creatures are poisoned once or twice year, they swarm in a most shocking manner. As Buddhism prohibits the taking of life, the poor pi-puppies are left to grow up, and it is a sickening sight to see these dogs all over Burma, one mass of mange and sores, blind or lame. I could not have imagined that animals could be in such a deplorable state, and yet live, as were some of those I saw; yet the oxen and buffaloes of the country are kept in fair condition. The ponies are nothing much to boast of, but they are hardy little things. They have a peculiar action—they amble; that is, both legs of the same side move together; it originated because the men found it so much easier to ride long distances in that way.

They are game little animals, and will scramble up walls or up and down ditches in a wonderful way. I saw one getting down an almost perpendicular bank of soft sand to one of the steamers on the Irrawaddy.

Mandalay may have been a grand city—the golden city—in the days of the kings, but it gives one the impression, now, of a deserted one! Certainly you can go about all day and not meet a white person, though natives absolutely swarm, and bullock-carts too! And how their carts creaked!

The names over the shops here were very quaint: "Teacher of dance and M.C. to slow music" was one; "David Ezra" and "Aaron Moses" appear favourite names.

In the large bazaar the women do all the business, and are much the same as the Indians in belittling their neighbour's wares when a purchaser arrives. It is always great fun to buy their silver wares: you tell them to weigh the article against the rupees, and then give so much extra the tola for workmanship.

The different trades keep to separate streets. Thus one street will be all trunk-makers, and one can see all the work from the cutting of the wood to the polishing of the ornamental boxes at the last. Another will be for the tailors, another for lacquer-workers, etc., etc. While staying in Mandalay I was fortunate enough to come in for the festival of burning a punghi, *i.e.*, a Buddhist priest. The older a punghi is, and the more Lents he has kept in a monastery, the longer he is kept before being burnt. Some are kept for years—in honey! which is sold after the pwe in the bazaars. No one, at least no European, eats honey, therefore, in Burmah!

The observation of Lent forms a similarity between Buddhism and Christianity; and another singular point is that marriages are not allowed to take place then!

Well this "pwe" for the priest began about 9-30 at night with an entertainment in a field, where the defunct punghi reposed in a grand catafalque

surrounded by candles and a few flowers, and was occasionally visited by curious or devout adherents. Close by was a platform erected with a curtain at the back, and a row of footlights in front consisting of jars of burning oil. Of course, there was nothing so conventional as a drop-scene or curtain. A few men played about and talked at the back of the stage, and in front of the platform the Burmans were ranged in a semi-circle squatting on the ground. At last one tall man, clad in a singlet and red shirt, shuffled to the front of the footlights, and after walking up and down as a professor might before his lecture, thinking out his telling points, he began, and delivered a fine oration in a good strong voice. After that boys came up and did acrobatic feats; and then eight girls appeared in the national dancing dresses—reddish skirts, greeny blue jackets, head-dress, and very much whitened faces. They walked, and swayed, and sang, then flopped down, apparently cross-legged; and then bent their bodies first to one side and then the other with arms outstretched, jumping up from the hips. They sang, and squirmed, and twitched—one could call it nothing else—in most fantastic attitudes. As they each sang in a different key, and the band played in one of its own, the effect was to our Western ears slightly peculiar. It was all received in solemn silence, but as it was an all-night sitting, they would probably become more lively later. The scene was decidedly weird: the open field, the moonlight, the catafalque in the background, the lighted stage, the squatting crowd

in front, and we white women there alone! The natives were very much interested in us, and made way for the memsahibs without any objection. Adding to the fascination of it all was the glow of the big cigars, which were being passed round from mouth to mouth—the pipe of peace! I suppose it is considered a compliment there to offer anyone a whiff of cigar. I do not know how many a Burmese woman can get through in a day. It was just as well that the crowd was amicable, as if they had objected to our presence it would have been somewhat awkward, for I don't know what we should have done, nor how we should have found our way back to the hotel in the dark in a hurry; but it was very fascinating—the still, warm air, the background of darkness, and the spice of fear, wondering if we were quite safe or not.

After a few days of enjoyment and excitement, the catafalque is carried to the burning-place, specially built up for it; and underneath is wood soaked in resin and oil, with banners and streamers hung all round. In ordinary cremations matches may be used; but for a punghi, rockets are the thing. These are let off at some little distance, and fall on the erection. When it is all, or nearly all, burnt, and the embers are cooling, the monks look for any bits of bones that may not have been consumed; and these are gathered up and buried near the pagoda; sometimes in the case of a great saint or "archbishop" they are pounded up into a paste with wood oil, "thitsi," and made into a Buddha!

Subscriptions are collected from the people, who come from great distances all round the country to attend these festivities, so that they really become exciting entertainments; and the death of a punghi might be hailed with delight, only it does not follow that the festivity would take place at once; it may be deferred for a few years, even.

Mandalay is a bad place in which to be thirsty! And as that was my usual state in that hot and scorching air, the difficulty arose as to what to drink. We had taken a large supply of Perrier water with us, but alas! it was soon exhausted, and nothing was to be obtained in all the city but local soda-water. As I had too often seen the local tanks where buffaloes are washed, also humans, as well as carts and clothes, I was not quite happy at drinking the soda at two annas a bottle—it was cheap *and* nasty. But with fervent prayers that it might not lead to cholera or enteric, we had to patronise the local firm, and consume the native supply. As for food, it was quite as difficult to get, by which I mean food which one could eat. One can generally find curries and eggs in some form or other; but sometimes the curry would be more than doubtful, and the eggs were served up with the so-called butter, which I think must have been the grease for railway wheels; it was exactly of the same consistency and colour. In the end, the problem of food resolved itself into fruit and biscuits only. On the long railway journeys there are certain stations fixed for meals, and so much time is allowed for you to get out and have them

in the little buffets. One generally found several dogs sniffing about, and no doubt they had become wise in their generation, and knew that when white people came along they would get a good dinner, although it was somewhat expensive to the traveller to spend two or three rupees on a pi-dog—and perhaps eat a banana or an orange himself.

The Arakan pagoda is the chief one in Mandalay. It was a long drive to it from the hotel; along the hot dusty roads our gharry bumped, and we sat suffocating in the box on wheels. At length we came to the entrance, beside which stand two enormous leo-gryphs, the usual guardians of Burmese pagodas; then through a long cloister up to the centre, where a regular bazaar is kept. All kinds of things are offered for sale in the temple —flowers and candles, joss-sticks and flags, ornaments, knives, clothing, and all the odds and ends necessary to Burmans, as well as curiosities for tourists. These are countless, and the Burman is quite alive to cater for them.

This pagoda would seem to have been erected about 1784, when a huge image of 12 feet high of Shwe Gautama was brought from Arakan by the king, or rather, as the inscription records, he attracted it there by his piety; but he must have exercised great strength and power, as it is all of brass, and would be very difficult to convey over the rocky hills, especially as it is in three pieces. The punghis naturally ascribe their success to supernatural power. This Buddha is covered by the seven-roofed spiral "pya that," with wonderful

carving and mosaics, and in front of it there are always crowds of natives kneeling and worshipping, amid hundreds of small candles stuck on the pavement. They do not object to strangers walking in front of them; but it was a work of art to step, without slipping, between the lighted candles and the falling grease.

Just outside is a large courtyard, in which is a huge image—also of brass—flanked on each side by a three-headed elephant. This has some marvellous powers of healing—perhaps an embryo Christian Scientist! While I was there I was fortunate enough to see a party of pilgrims, chiefly women. Where they had a pain they rubbed the image in the corresponding place—one noticed that the god's "tummy" was considerably brighter than any other part of him. After rubbing, they passed on to some of the huge bells hung round the square, and struck them with the antlers of deer lying by for the purpose. It is strange that these great bells are never swung, and have no clappers. The sight was very picturesque: the women all in very charming colours, very clean and fresh; a few children were with them, who did not seem at all disturbed by our presence amongst them. When the pagoda was first built, a hundred and twenty Arakan families were settled on it as slaves; so probably all the bazaar stall-holders were descendants of these. They all live in it; food is sold there; and they only want a mat to sleep on! The long alley-like cloisters, all converging to the centre, are somewhat dark, or at last appear so to those coming in

out of the bright sunlight, whilst the atmosphere is distinctly heavy with the smell of burning candles, joss-sticks, frangipanni flowers for offerings, *and* people! On one side of this is the sacred tank, where the turtles are kept, as they are at Kandy in Ceylon. They are fed by the pilgrims, who buy rice and grains to give them; one was beset by children wanting one to buy handfuls to throw to them. They are ugly creatures, though one hardly sees more than a head at a time on the top of a tank. They are never allowed to be killed; so the constant increasing of the tank's inhabitants does not make the water very desirable—it is covered with green slime.

What a centre of interest a big pagoda like this is. The natives flock to it, spending nearly all their lives there. It is, I suppose their meeting-place—their club—and as all they want in the way of food can be bought in its precincts, what better place could they choose! The way they mingle up their devotions with their pleasures is a peculiar phase of their life. Close by some of these stalls would be a Buddha, with candles all placed round on the floor anywhere! At first we were not sure if they minded people going by; but we managed to pick our steps through the worshippers, and between their candles and cigars, without any apparent annoyance to them.

From this Arakan pagoda, which is at Amarapura, to the Kutho Daw is another long bumpy drive in the dog-kennel of a ticca gharry. This place goes by the name of the 700 pagodas, though

in reality there are 729 shrines, all in parallel lines round a central white pagoda. These were not such a centre of interest as the Arakan, there being no bazaar attached to it. The only object apparently of the Kutho Daw is to give merit to its builder, King Thibaw's uncle.

Each of these shrines contains an alabaster slab, on which is inscribed the whole of the Buddhist Bible.

Not a couple of hundred yards away are the remains of the Incomparable Pagoda, which was burnt down some years ago. It must have been a very fine one, judging from the ruins. Another place of interest is the Golden Monastery, which stands in quite a large compound, though in one of the poorest parts of Mandalay. It has seven tiers, all most elaborately carved and gilded on the top; standing on the usual supports of columns, and up to the platform round the halls, is a short flight of stairs. As we went up here, the pupils presumably of the punghi, in other words, naughty little Burmese boys, threw large stones at us with great glee. Stone-throwing seems inherent in every child of every race, but it is stronger in the Burmans than in any I have yet seen, for we were stoned again at a pagoda lower down the river! As the steamer was putting in for a couple of hours while cargo was loading, my friend and I walked out into the country to see the pagoda of the place—every hamlet has one. This was a peculiar specimen, with a grand hti or umbrella on the top. Crowds of boys followed us, after setting on the pi dogs to

bark, and after demanding pice to no effect, they retired behind some walls and simply showered great stones at us. We beat a hasty but dignified retreat, taking care to keep our parasols well over our heads to save them from attack, and were rather glad to get back to the steamer. But this is a "stone's throw" digression from the Golden Monastery! Groups of older boys were squatting down learning their lessons; and in doorways punghis themselves were lolling, with books in their hands. The rooms are magnificently carved inside, but are very dark and will soon be in sad disrepair; already many holes can be seen in the flooring; and on the verandah it is not safe to walk; in some places one felt one was in danger of falling through! It has been a very magnificent place, but there is a deserted air about it now. By that I don't mean that it was by any means devoid of human beings, as it is quite a large monastery, where the order of the Yellow Robe pass their days in lazy contentment. Their priesthood is very nominal, for they have no charge of souls. It is not their place to direct other people's religion; it is every man for himself there; the rest of the sentence added *bien entendu!* They have not to take any part in the worship at the pagodas. What they have to do is to teach the children, all of whom, more or less, are educated, so to speak, in these monasteries. The punghis must not ask for nor have any money; they must accept alms, and go begging for their food. I have seen in Rangoon, about 7 a.m., a procession of these priests going round begging from house to house for

The Great Image, Arakan Pagoda.

their daily food. They must walk in single file, with their eyes fixed on the ground six feet in front of them; they must not ask nor thank for contributions. If a house is closed, it is the inhabitant who loses the chance of doing good!

The palace is a very unique building or series of buildings, all of wood, with, for the most part, windowless rooms. The decoration is crude—bits of glass stuck in and carvings and colouring all round. The throne-room is arranged with a staircase up to the throne from the room behind, with a door at the top, so that the king could walk on to the throne at once, and be above the people. It is all, however, falling to pieces now, and "the glory of the kingdom is departed."

CHAPTER XXI.

THE IRRAWADDY.

FROM Mandalay we went up to Bhamo, where few tourists penetrate. The journey is enough to put most people off, but it is full of varied interest, though the actual scenery of the country is poor. One passes through dried-up paddy-fields; long, sandy, uninhabited tracts, sun-dried and baked soil; trees few and far between, except in the distance; and the flaming cotton tree, with its gorgeous coloured flowers. The natives have a saying that if these trees flower well, they will have a good season of rains, on which, of course, their prosperity depends.

Leaving the city about midday, we wandered slowly up the line to Amarapura, where we had to change trains and be ferried across the broad river to the Saigan shore. Time, of course, counts as nothing, so we had a leisurely stroll down the sandy bank to the steamer, and then were able to sit on the deck under the awning and watch our trunks being carried down on the top of the girls' heads. It was like an ant-hill, for the people were all very busy carrying luggage, with a great deal of chatter, girls carrying everything.

The heavy cargo is taken across in the railway trucks. They are run down a siding, and then on

to a raft-like boat, which is tacked on to the steamer, and so to the corresponding line on the other side. They are let down the bank by machinery worked at the top. Naturally, in the flood-time, the level is all right, and the siding is not required. The railway now runs again through flat country, the train stops at most stations, so that speed is not great.

We had been told that next morning we were to change trains at Naba, where we were due at 8 a.m. At seven I woke up and heard patterings on the carriage roof as we stopped at a station. I thought I was dreaming that I was in England during a thunderstorm; but rain it actually was! They have it about once a month in the cold weather, and we had certainly struck "the rains." Then came another pattering—this time on the window-pane—which proved to be a young Eurasian who had been kind enough to help us the evening before in our language difficulty, and he said it was Naba Junction, and the other train was almost due to start. Such a thing as arriving an hour before time had never happened to us in the East, and naturally we were not ready. After a hasty scrimmage for clothes, —toilet there was no time for—and a cramming of bedding into our bags, we tumbled out, hoping our solar topees were on the right way round. Our parasols were soon dripping; ditto my white frock. Coolies were hastily summoned to collect the multitudinous boxes and bags, and our precious Perrier water. Our Burmese friend helped, as did also some Tommies who were on the same train, much

amused, I felt sure, but ready gallantly to help their countrywomen in distress! Still, the train was caught; otherwise we might have had to sit in the station until the next day, like the native, and that would not have been a joy.

Now came a delightful run slowly up hill through a real jungle; trees with enormous leaves, on which the raindrops were glistening; tall denizens of this primeval forest which had never been disturbed since creation, till England put this railway through. Now and then an alley seems to break through the palms and betels and teak trees, giving a vista into the distance; at other times it was dark and mysterious-looking, and I wondered what it hid: animals, perhaps, just retiring to sleep at the dawn; great leopards perhaps, deer, sambuck, and others; birds, pheasants, and bigger game, all living a blissful life rarely disturbed by man. When we had gone some miles through this, we emerged at Katha, the rain still coming down in the way it does in the tropics when once it begins. A long and steep bank now had to be negotiated to the river steamer; awkward enough in the soft sand when dry, but absolutely perilous that morning, when rain had turned it into muddy slime, on which one could hardly get a foothold. Added to this, the planks on which one stepped on to the steamer were blocked with great bales of cargo, leaving only a few inches to walk on. If it had not been for the timely aid of the Eurasian gentleman, who held me up on one side, and a coolie, who dragged me on the other, the Irrawaddy would have had another

Waiting for the Ferry. Irrawaddy.

bather that morning. Well, that boat was somewhat primitive, though it was a nice little paddle-steamer called the ferry boat. The cabins were small, and not clean. The little water allowed for washing purposes was put ready in a basin; if you wanted more you shouted for the "boy," and then he always wanted the basin to fetch it in! The bathroom had a bath in it, but the water was thick and nasty, straight out of the river. This boat had only a serang in command: no white officers nor crew. The passengers consisted of our two selves, the Eurasian, and one other, who seemed a Government official of some kind. The natives down below deck were thick on the ground. The steward was a typical Burman, in nice clean shirt, white coat, and pink silk headdress. He could talk a few words of pidgeon English, and was most attentive. Presumably, it was the cook wallah who came up and announced dinner would be ready in a few minutes.

Suddenly, as we were leaving one of the ports of call, we heard a noise and felt a bumping—the paddle-wheel had broken upon a rock. Here was a predicament. It was no place in which to go ashore. There was no other boat to be taken, and if we did not arrive at Bhamo as arranged, our whole trip would be put out of joint, as we had engaged berths on another steamer back from Mandalay on a certain date, there being no other vacant ones. The Government official summoned the serang, who conferred with someone else, who sent another to ask the engineer when we were likely to get on. First, it could not be mended for some days; then,

by to-morrow perhaps——. Was there a Government launch to be had? No; that was miles up the river. Was there a Deputy Commissioner to ask help from? No; he lived further down the river. Was there a steamer likely to go by? No; this was the one and only.

Well, the only thing to do was to sit and watch the rain coming down, for the people soon went away from the banks; perhaps a disabled steamer was no novelty to them! The crowd on board was entertained by a local conjuror, who, with a great beating of bells, collected a number round him, and when we went to look, was shewing the tricks of a lot of mice! A three-hand of bridge consoled us for some time, while at intervals mighty hammerings were going on.

We felt somewhat cheered at last on hearing that we might be able to move on early in the morning; and so we did; but instead of arriving at Bhamo by daylight it was towards midday. Passing the defile the weather cleared up, and the sun came back in all its glory.

These defiles remind one very much of the Norwegian fjords. They are narrow, with rocky sides; one perpendicular rock rises to 800 feet, and has a pagoda on the top. Another pagoda lower down was inhabited by a saintly punghi for many years, who lived a hermit's life, and was considered a most holy man. He was buried close by, and his mother also was allowed to be buried some short distance below him as a great honour. Now are seen quantities of cormorants; and those, with the

numbers of odd-looking fishing nets shew that there are any quantity of fish in the river, so that perhaps the holy punghi did not fare so badly on his perch amongst the rocks! If he were an admirer of Nature, what more beautiful life could he have had, and with the Buddhist contemplative temperament it must have been ideal; far from the rush and strife with which no doubt Burmans, even in their Eastern slowness, sometimes get enwhirled.

Soon the blue hills of China came into view. How we longed to get just over the border; but from Bhamo the nearest point, though only thirty miles away, meant having a caravan—not the fashionable hobby raging in England now, but a cavalcade and horses, and plenty of coolies for luggage, food, etc. Some friends of mine who went—a man and his wife—said it was very enjoyable after you had impressed on your *entourage,* by practising revolver shots at a tree, that you intended to be obeyed. At first they found much trouble with the natives; so as I hadn't a revolver with me, I thought better of attempting it. Next time I go I shall certainly carry one—*but* I hope no one will load it for me unawares!

CHAPTER XXII.

BHAMO AND MANDALAY.

BHAMO having been reached, we went ashore, and found a miserable ticca gharry, into which we climbed, and drove off to the one store in the place. Some may say, " Yes, woman-like, they must go shopping! " but we were on the quest for some of the local curiosities, and this was the one and only place to try for them. It was a quaint shop, reminding one of what one had read of the American stores in the back-of-beyond country. The owner, a " gentleman of pale tint," seemed quite pleased to tell us all about the place, and urged us not to go to the joss temple, as there was a serious outbreak of plague in the town, and some parts were deserted in consequence. He and his household had all been inoculated against it, and he strongly advised our keeping to the open streets. This was cheering news! He proceeded to offer us—following the usual Eastern hospitality—a drink of lemonade; but judging it was probably made from the nearest tank, and might contain a few plague microbes, I declined. Then he offered an orchid, and that I could not refuse! It appeared that he did a great trade in these plants, having many men employed in the jungle gathering them, and then sends them all over the world by post.

The pagoda was some little way out, so we felt

safe in driving to that. It was a pure white bell one, with the usual Buddhas inside, and the large bell standing a few yards away. The view from there was charming: the great hills of China in the near distance, beautifully blue and clear; the few fields, or what is equal to them, lying at the foot bathed in brilliant sunshine. Along a road we saw several Chinese and Shans, some in their best costumes, as if they were going to a festival. We could not stay out long in that noontide heat, so we found our way back to the boat, on which we were to stay a day and a night before starting on the return journey. On arriving we found, somewhat to our dismay, that we were the only passengers, white or otherwise! But the serang was most agreeable, and the steward and cook shikohed to us, and brought us some luncheon, and then came a welcome siesta. Later in the afternoon we sallied forth again with a camera, keeping near the river, where in one place we came upon a large boat of lime, which was being landed quickly, and carried up at once to the bullock-carts. This looked suggestive of plague, or, rather, of its results! The road was bordered with houses, just one floor supported on legs! By the way, did I tell you that houses originally were built of one storey only, because it was unlucky to have anyone's feet over your head; and this is so strong a feeling still that, when one of these border magnates came to Paris, the whole upper floor of the hotel was reserved for him. At the time I wondered, but now I can understand.

Everything is done in public in Burma as in India. In front of one house a woman was squatting on the ground making dough. She kneaded it well in a hole in a box and banged it down; then a man who was standing by with a long pole in his hands prodded the mass of dough with the pole. This process was repeated several times whilst we watched it, and it seemed likely to go on, so we left; but returning the same way, we saw the good lady resting after her labours, squatting this time by the result, which was a few cakes made in a flat shape and baking on a piece of rabbit-netting over some grey ashes! The Burmans do not appear to have any objection to the camera, and seeing one lady coming along dressed most charmingly in rich chestnut-coloured satin, light coatee, and hair decorated with flowers, and large ear-rings in her ears, I approached, and smiled and bowed and pointed to the camera. She also smiled and bowed, and posed herself instantly, holding up her lovely parasol of oiled cloth, painted with all sorts of little pictures. Then when I had snapped her she walked off with more smiles—words we could not exchange!

Another bit of dumb show gained me the picture of a Shan woman in a boat, with her baby tied on to her back by a shawl. She at first wanted to be taken herself full front, but I at last got her to understand I wanted the wee baby as well. She was a merry good-tempered looking woman, wearing one of the enormous hats, like a cartwheel with a raised point in the middle. It is astonishing what a great deal can be done with signs: a few flickers

A Burmese Beauty, Bhamo.

of the hand, a pointing finger, and, given ordinary intelligence on the part of the signee, your desire can often be accomplished. But I sometimes wonder what they think of us white people, and wonder, too, what I should do if a black person came along in England and wanted my photo. Wandering along the road near the river, "on the way to China," we saw beyond the houses a caravan of the Shans, who come down periodically for trade, and also for looting anything handy. There had been some friction with the Chinese just before we arrived, and there was an expedition to the Burma and Chinese frontier of the Borderers and East Surreys. Two Chinese regiments had mutinied, and were on their way to Bhamo and Myithyina to plunder. Orders had been given to arrest suspicious stragglers, and there had been a skirmish between Chinese raiders and the military police. They come down with their mules and packs, and camp outside the town. Their dress is usually dark: divided skirts, long coats, small caps, and always a square embroidered bag hung over the shoulder; the women in bright blue silk skirt, white coatee, and green and yellow scarf. Then many Kachins were to be seen as well as the real Chinese; in fact, it is much more a Chinese town, taking it altogether, than it is a Burmese one.

Bhamo goes in much for "ngape," called nappi, what might be almost called the national food. It is fish laid out in the sun to dry; and one passed several patches of them, the smell reaching one long before one reached the fish! When dry, they are

pounded up with the flavouring of dust and dirt, which must get on them lying as they do in the open street. And such a smell! Nothing can equal it. Sometimes ngape is made of a shiny kind of fish found in tanks and ditches by the railway. These fish, when the water dries off, bury themselves in the mud; and the natives actually dig them out. Then, again, the hilsa, the Indian salmon, is used, the larger kinds being cleaned before drying, but the smaller ones left in a heap to cure themselves. Penang ngapi is considered the best, and makes its appearance on European tables as balachong. It is considered a great delicacy with Burmans. Ngapi, made with the commonest fish, is often bought as paste by the Kitmutghars, and used as anchovy sauce!

The inhabitants are very good in supplying water in the chatties under the little wooden sheds. These are usually covered over, and have the primitive ladle of a split cocoanut shell lying by. I never saw so many anywhere else, except, perhaps, at Mandalay, in the native quarters. I suppose they all "acquire merit" by this attention to wayfarers. It was a dreary little place, really only of importance as being the nearest town to China, where the Chinese and hill tribes must come, if they want to connect with river or rail (though the latter here is seventy miles away).

When we returned to the boat we found we were still alone, and I could not help thinking how extraordinary it was: two white women who could not speak a word of the language, and who, with

Bhamo, Upper Burma.

great difficulty, could understand the pidgeon English of the boatmen, quite at the mercy of these people, though I suppose they did not know it! What should we have done if they had said, " Your money or your life! "

We sat and watched the quaint craft up and down the river, and the boys and men playing in the water, till it was too dark, and then we had a very fair dinner. How was it cooked and where? Well, this was a case of " where ignorance is bliss 'tis folly to be wise "; and then we retired to our little cabins. Next morning we found we had one or two more white passengers, while the lower deck was very well patronised with natives. The calling of the steamer was quite the event of the day at the different places. Crowds came down to watch, and help or hinder anyone who was getting on or off. Sellers of bananas or other fruit, and fish, or unknown comestibles were carried in the large baskets suspended on each side of a bamboo across their shoulders. They all appeared orderly and friendly with each other; the great row when they talk seems to mean good fellowship, and not the quarrel it really appears. Sometimes a few passengers would come out in a boat and be picked up, but usually the bow was pointed to the shore and simply run in, and then a plank was thrown out for them to scramble up or off as they liked. There was nothing of any excitement on the return journey till we arrived at Mandalay the next day. We had intended staying a few days there again, but the hotel decided matters for us. We could not face

it a second time, so we got into two ticcas and told them to drive to the steamer office. How exasperating it is when you cannot talk a language, and how stupid you think the people are not to understand you! However, by dint of much arranging we started off. Oh, the bumps, the jolts, the creaks, the heat, the dust, and the interminable length of that drive! Arriving at the offices, we found them closed, and the clerks had all gone to their midday rest and tiffin. There was nothing else to do but to go to the steamer, and at last made the gharry wallahs understand. Well, we arrived at the foot of a sandy bank, like a wall, in front of us. That was the place for us to get out; but where was the river, and where the steamers? My friend volunteered to walk up the sandy wall and look over the other side. She disappeared, and I was left alone, much to the amusement of the gharry wallahs and crowds of children and men around. I had nothing to amuse myself with, except by watching a woman giving a youngster a bath—in front of the house, of course. From a large pail of water she ladled some out into a chattie, and poured it over her son, and repeated the process, the urchin yelling and literally stamping with rage, but he never offered to run away, although she wasn't holding him. When the water-sports were done, he seemed to dry in the sun, and then they disappeared under cover. On the other side was a billiard table (of all things to find!), a lot of natives taking a cue. Now and then a bullock-cart would come by, drive up the sandy wall, and disappear; or it would come

from the other side. Finally, G—— came back, and said she had found a bullock-cart to take the luggage, as there was a long way to go yet, and the gharries could not drive there. These bullock-carts certainly do go over the most impossible roads! As some of our letters were to be sent to the office of a friend in Mandalay, I drove back (another five miles of jolts and bumps) to get them; and was wondering how I should find my way back to the steamer, when our friend very kindly sent his peon with me.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE RIVER AND CUSTOMS.

Now began our troubles. In Rangoon we had been told by the agents that the only available cabins for the next few weeks were on this particular steamer, and on the sponson deck, where we should only have a few steps to walk to get across to the saloon. Being rather doubtful as to these, we took the trouble to go to the docks and inspect one of the steamers. There, of course, the boat looked very nice, being empty, and the cabins seemed fair; but we were not prepared for hundreds of natives being camped out on the deck, close up against our cabin. They are allowed a mat's space; and on this mat they sleep and wash, dress and undress—what little they have to do in that way—cook and sleep. They were as thick as they could be, as, unfortunately, a pilgrimage was going on. All night they talked, and coughed, and spat, and early in the morning some accident—so-called—happened to a hose of water, for suddenly a river rushed through our cabin, soaking the bags, our slippers, etc. Water is all very delightful, but I did not care for the washing of all the microbes—to say nothing of any other living things which might survive the flood—through the partition of the cabin. Added to this discomfort, the people would block up the way to one's door, and we had almost to walk over them to get through, while the smell was appalling. I had to go to the captain and say that if another cabin was not to be found, I should sleep in a long chair on deck in preference. Then

a cabin was found! Moral: Go straight to headquarters, and don't deal with agents.

However, when we had just settled in this fresh cabin, a punghi ran amok and stabbed three men very seriously indeed, one being the steward, so we were thankful we had not to wade through gore to our beds! He was quickly overpowered and hustled off the boat to the nearest jail, where he would have a little more time given him for meditation and contemplation. Possibly he may not have been a priest at all, because as they have their heads shaved, as well as convicts, the latter, when they just come out of gaol, assume the Buddhist robes till their hair grows again! What a cloak religion is all over the world!

The crowd on the deck was most fascinating when seen at a distance and with plenty of eau de Cologne under one's nose; men, women, children, all clothed in wonderful colours, their bowls of food beside them, as they could purchase what they wanted at a little bazaar, which is carried on board for their use, and fruit, vegetables, grain, etc., were brought and made into meals when wanted. These stall-holders on the boats have held stalls for generations! If passengers, on going ashore, wanted anything more, lots of saleswomen were busy offering their wares. One's black brother is all very well, but I prefer him at a distance; also his horrible ngapi, ghee, and garlic. I preferred my more distant relative, a dear little monkey, the pet of the captain on this steamer. He was allowed on our deck with his chain, and sat in our laps

and went to sleep just like a child. The mosquitoes on this part of the river were exceedingly troublesome. The scenery was very flat, and the atmosphere in many places thick with the haze of jungle-fires.

The current in the river is a thing they have to battle with, as each year, when the river falls, it shifts its course, and the sandy bed is filled up in places where the year before it was hollowed; so that a fresh course has to be marked each time, and bamboos stuck down in the mud with pieces of tin hung on to them, painted according to the sailing lights. It is quite a business to pick up the buoys, one officer told me, there being as many as seventy in a few miles. Added to this are dangerous curves. The leadsman, or, rather, two of them, were at work, throwing the line and shouting in a most melancholy voice the depth of water; this was taken up on the other side, and a regular duet went on. These larger steamers tow a flat barge alongside for live cargo; and the presence of bullocks, horses, etc., so close in the heat, attract more flies than are wanted, and also help to increase the smells. One had to cross this, sometimes, to get ashore.

A few days of intolerable heat made us glad to leave the boat to stay with my friend, the D.C. of Thayetmyo; but the heat on land was as bad, a torrid air over everything. Thayetmyo is the "mango city," and was at one time of great importance, and had a large garrison; but at present only half a battalion is represented there. The

large barracks and lines are deserted, and some of the houses are actually falling down in the cantonments. That is more literal than is usually understood; the posts on which they are built give way—eaten by white ants—and one sees the house leaning over in the most doleful fashion. There are nice shady roads round there, the usual pagodas, and a large bazaar, in which stacks and stacks of English umbrellas were for sale. These, sad to say, are superseding the beautiful native ones, which make such picturesque touches in the landscape! It was here I saw the shikoh performance in all its elaborate form, when a peon from the Court came up with despatches to my host.

In native houses, a cocoanut is hung in a bamboo basket on the front verandah, in which lives the guardian "nat" or spirit. When a child is born, offerings are made to this—nuts, bananas, tea, eggs, syrup, cooked rice, and cake. The Burmans are most superstitious, or shall we say are worshippers of spirits? They will do nothing without consulting a horoscope, and there are many spirits to be propitiated. When he builds a house, the Burman puts a cloth on the top of each post, to cover up the spirit which inhabits it! Long columns, or posts of wood, are often seen in the villages, with ornaments on the top, or flags, and in these other spirits dwell—all "nats," which are equivalent to pixies, fairies, gnomes, and such-like beings in other countries. They are all spirits of nature—thirty-seven in number—so it takes a good Burman some time to propitiate them all.

Some of the lower classes always raise up their saucer of food before eating, with a prayer to the village nat. When a Burman starts on a journey, he hangs up a bunch of bananas on a twig of the tha-bye tree, fastened to the pole of his buffalo-cart, to conciliate any spirit whose road he may come across. A forest hunter will put rice and leaves against any extra large tree; and a fisherman will place offerings in the bow of his boat. The presence of spirits in trees may be known by the trembling and shaking of the leaves when the others around are quiet.

Noises are thought to ward the spirits off. Men will sing loudly if travelling in the dark; and the axles of the cartwheels are never oiled nor greased, because the squeaking keeps off the evil spirits.

All this may seem contrary to the tenets of their religion; but, then, they do not actually pray to Buddha to do them any good, and the priests never troubles about the "souls" of their people (the possession of which they deny), only teaching secular education. The spirit or nat of a man is his butterfly, the Leip-bya. This does not remain constantly in the body, but can go away while the man is asleep, and its travels cause dreams to the owner. What the Leip-bya sees, he communicates to the sleeper. If the man should be waked suddenly, the Leip-bya may not have time to get back into him, so the Burmans will never rouse a sleeping person; in fact, often Europeans have been extremely angry with their bearers because they would not wake them in time. "But if I did, the

Sahib would die!" The natives amongst themselves would never dream of doing it, and if a Commissioner arrives in a village and calls to see the head babu, and the latter is having his siesta, nothing would induce his people to wake him up.

When a man dies, the oldest relative holds out a handkerchief at the burial, and calls the Leip-bya into it, because, if left, it might become an evil spirit and haunt the place. This handkerchief is carried back, and kept a week between two house posts, and on the seventh day it is opened, as there is bv that time no fear that the Leip-bya can return to the dead man.

The way of reckoning time is very singular, and savours of the simple life. "Sky-closing-time" means about six in the evening; "Brothers don't know each other time," *i.e.*, 9 p.m.; "When the sun was a span above the horizon or as high as a toddy palm," "When monks go a-begging," *i.e.*, six or seven in the morning; "When the red star rises," is a delightful way of describing the dawn, and it is truly as a *red* star, though as a large one, that the sun comes up behind the hills.

As the dark falls quickly, so comes daylight, and I have watched the red light come up suddenly behind the mountains in the east, as if the Chinese were setting the whole country on fire; the sky one mass of glowing flame; and then the red, red ball appears, just a semi-circle at first, and then, almost before you realise it, is all in sight. That struck me as so strange in the East—the very quick rising above a hill of the sun or moon.

A musket's sound is a neat way of saying half a mile. One hill, two hills, or three away. Their proverbs are quaint: "Eat little, stomach slender, eat much, stomach ache"; "If a great man flatter you, be afraid." Beware of a man's shadow—*i.e.*, his relations—and of a bee's sting. "The more you know, the more luck you have." Truly philosophy is much the same all the world over.

In Thayetmyo there is a hospital and a jail. The convicts in the latter make various articles of basket work, etc., which are sold in the town. The convicts are also made to work outside, and I saw several gangs of them, chained in couples, and in charge of a guard with a gun, going down to load boats and carry water, etc., etc. Although we have done a good deal to put down dacoitry, there are very often cases of it occurring. For instance, I was told at Thayetmyo of the carrying off of a young female child (who was watching the herds of goats in the fields) by dacoits, who demanded a reward of 500 rupees from the father. The poor man could only beg it, and having collected the amount, took it out to these men, who, mistaking who he was presumably, killed the child in front of him. That happened recently, and robbers are often met with in the outlying districts.

Burmese ponies are a breed to themselves: a small kind, very hardy, and taught to amble instead of cantering, as this is much easier for the man when riding long distances. By this means he never need rise in the saddle, and the little animals cover the ground very quickly. They are used to scrambling

up and down banks, and over the mud walls which surround some of the lands. A friend told me what sport they used to have with the paper-chases there on these ponies. They would get up a wall, then pause a second to change feet, and then down again, and it took some riding to stick on, till you got used to them.

The heat was tremendous the day we left Thayetmyo. From the bungalow we watched for the boat coming down the river, and then started; but even so were too early, so were accommodated with chairs on the platform of a pagoda, perched high up on the top of the bank. Here we had a good view of the river bank, and the rushing up and down of the coolies taking cargo on and carrying our luggage. The scorching air can be better understood when I say that the very crows were gasping with open mouths when they were not cawing! When the time came for us to be escorted down, we found ourselves again the only white passengers; but the officers were Europeans this time, and most kind to us. On arriving at Prome after dark, the captain came up to the station with us, accompanied by a Lascar with a lantern. It was a funny scramble up the sandy bank in the dark across railway lines, through a bit of the bazaar, and so to the station. For by this time we had had enough of the river boats with their murderous punghis, their mosquitoes and other insects, which at night collected round the globes of the lamps in such vast quantities, that only when they fell off scorched could you see any glass, and your tumbler at meals

had a queer little wooden lid to keep them out. But the life scenes on the river, all the way down, were full of interest, whether it was the hurrying of a herd of cows down to the shore to drink, or the crowds waiting for the boat, the cargoes of sacks and sacks of paddy or pith used for their cigars, or dried palm leaves, tamarinds, pickled tea from China, cotton, monkey nuts, etc. At one place we discovered in a lonely little village, while walking inland, a regular factory for these monkey nuts. They are pressed by machinery and the oil extracted. This is then put into the "Burmah oil" tins, or kerosene tins, and soldered up ready to be shipped to Europe to be refined, and sold (possibly) as pure olive oil! Cargo takes a long time to put on board the flats, which are fastened to the steamer, although any number of coolies take part in the lading. As much as can be got on is taken, and the rest left to await the next steamer. Even on the main-deck of the passenger steamer are extraordinary medleys to be seen: lovely trunks inlaid with different sorts of wood, cases of fruit, bags of cotton, and, in one, a quantity of Buddhas of all sizes sitting with their faces to the wall!

The way the steamers are fastened up at the landing places is primitive, but effectual. Six Lascars jump overboard with the hawser line, and swim ashore hand over hand, and then draw it up to the pivot, where it is fastened; and as they only wear a loin cloth, the sun soon dries them again, and certainly, if I were they, I should consider that

part of the day's work the best of any, for the water should be cooler than the boat.

We finished up our tour at Rangoon, just staying long enough there again to see our friends, and enjoy a lovely motor run to a bungalow on the Victoria Lakes, about eight miles out, along a shady road through woods. These lakes are partly natural, and are, of course, very delightful to live by in the dry weather. The garden was typically tropical, palms reaching down to the water's edge; banana trees would wave in the wind—if there were any. Pineapples were growing in the one part, mango trees, suppotas, limes and oranges; and for ornament, the gorgeous Amherstia nobilis, a magnificent crimson flower on a very large shrub-like tree.

This bungalow was devised to catch every breath of air possible, being open all across the rooms at the top, and the jilmils coming right down to the ground instead of windows, so that they could be opened to let the air through in the same way as Venetian shutters, and yet keep out the glare of the sunlight. A charming view one had over the lake, where the water lay in the bright sunshine, glistening like molten glass.

My advice to anyone travelling in Burmah is to take plenty of biscuits in tins and a good supply of mineral waters; with these and fruit you can get along very well; but to depend on railway stations or hotels is a frail reed. It is a pity there is not better catering for English people.

CHAPTER XXIV.

MORE MANNERS AND CUSTOMS.

BURMA is a very rich country; the soil seems to be able to grow anything. But rice is the chief product; it suits the lazy Burman, as he can get a good crop whilst doing very little work himself. To begin with, in middle June, when the monsoon bursts, the rains make the soil into thick mud. Now is the time to plough, so the native implement, a single bar-harrow with three teeth of hard wood, is drawn by bullocks, or more often by water-buffaloes, as these revel in wet mud. A bar of wood rises from the cross-bar, and on this a boy can sit to guide it up and down. In August, when the rains are not so frequent, and the ground is drying up a little, the young rice plants sown some weeks earlier in a small patch, are pricked out by women or children. A stick can be used to make the hole for the tiny plants, but fingers and hands are usually preferred. In November the cutting begins with a sickle. Numbers of men and women work at it with no particular method: a field has to be cut, so why worry how to set about it? The straw is not cut down to the ground as in our cornfields; the ears of the paddy merely being reaped, and the rest of the straw left to be burnt later on, as a fertilising agent for the soil.

The bullocks thresh out the rice by moving round and round, their slow movement typical of Eastern ways! And when it is ready, the rice is put into

bags, and carried down to the nearest station on road or river. All along the lines in Burma, at nearly every station, huge mounds of these sacks are to be seen piled up to a great height, waiting to be stacked on to the train. Without exaggeration, the millions of bags that one saw would lead one to think that the Burmans ought to get very rich, but there is so much speculation carried on over the harvest that the actual farmer seldom makes a fortune. There are quite thirty different kinds of rice; and the Burmans much prefer to husk their rice in their own way, in wooden mortars, with pestle which works on a lever. Rice done in steam mills loses the hard shell, and also the next coating of shell; and another thing which to them is obnoxious is that the grinding induces great heat in the stones, and this heat scorches out the flavour. This rice machine, if one may give it so important a name, is often to be seen outside the huts in India, as well as in Burma. It is so primitive that at first I thought it was a see-saw for the children to play with!

Then, too, the Burman, if he acquires wealth, must also acquire merit—" Kutha "—and this he must do by building a pagoda, on which shall be set out on a marble slab how much money he spent on building it, his name, etc. But here the merit stops; it does not include the keeping of it in repair; and on the Shwe Dagon pagoda, in Rangoon, many of the " shrines " were sadly neglected. He likes, however, for people to address him as " Builder of a pagoda," and he will also say to his wife before

people, "O wife of a builder of a pagoda." Certainly they like their good works to be known.

This merit gets for him the last release. He does not go through another incarnation, even if some incarnations are due to him; and the most reprobate can by this means attain the last rest. What a peculiar faith this is; it rather leads to self-satisfaction, though, I think. A man who sets up water-pots on the road, or builds a rest-house, or gives a Buddha, attains, so they believe, a good trans-incorporation when he dies. Pagodas are always called payas by the natives. The former name is probably derived from the Sanskrit, meaning a relic-shrine; and its first form was the Cingalese dagoba—though that is pronounced in Ceylon dagoba—but if one talks of a pag-oda, I doubt if anyone would recognise the word.

Their homes are arranged in very "simple life" style. Beds are unknown; mats are used to sleep on, with a rug perhaps. Chairs are unknown, for the Eastern prefers to sit on his haunches, or, rather, balance himself from his knees, for I noticed often that only their feet touched the ground, and the rest of their body seemed, when squatting, to hang from the knees. Then if chairs are not, why have tables, when the ground is so much handier? They cook their food in a box-shaped article, with fuel underneath and on the top. The utensils are earthern pots; and they eat from little bowls, sometimes with chopsticks, with a spoon, or with the pre-historic knife and fork—*i.e.*, fingers. I saw many at Mandalay feeding from these bowls, fishing

Shwe Dagon Pagoda, Rangoon.

up the choice bits out of the curry, and drinking water sold by a hawker, who had several glasses turned upside down on a tray, and had placed rose leaves inside in the water to make it more attractive.

The houses are only huts made of palm-leaves, and stalks, and cocoanut fibre, generally with the front open. How some of them withstand the rainy season one cannot help wondering. They look as if the first storm would wash them away. The houses for Europeans are sometimes built on a pukka brick foundation, as that keeps the lower part cooler by day. The upper storey is built of wood, as that gives off heat more quickly by night, and so keeps the bedrooms cooler. In most of these houses the upper storey of bedrooms is built on the plan of cubicles, a large space all along the top being open, to give free passage for air. This has its disadvantages, as conversations can be heard with great ease, and this sometimes leads to awkward *contretemps,* as happened at one hotel where I was staying. An elderly lady, sharing a bedroom with another, began talking intimate affairs at 6 a.m., till a chorus of " Hush-sh-sh " came from all the rooms adjoining. When the houses haven't these brick foundations, they are built on piles, and look very peculiar. Occasionally the white ants eat into these pillars, and down comes the house.

If a Burman wants to store some hay for his cattle, he does not build himself a barn, but tucks the hay into the nearest tree, high up out of reach of animals who might eat it. The philosophy of such simple acts is quite amusing. Why build a

barn when you can use what is near at hand? When trees are close by, why not use them? Their philosophy seems to enter into their legal affairs. People were required to take an oath by holding a book full of awful curses over their heads; and if they were not telling the truth, the curses recounted in the book would come upon them. But there were so many people who were not allowed to take an oath that evidently they did not distress themselves much about litigation. Amongst those who may not take this oath were those who don't believe in the merit of good works, great talkers, overbearing men, asthmatic people, hot-tempered people, gluttons, gamblers, and many more. I should, however, have thought that it was quite enough to start another lawsuit to decide who was overbearing, who hot-tempered, etc., etc. The Orientals, generally, seem much fonder of litigation than they used to be; and it is a singular fact that in India, at any rate, they always begin their quarrels as the hot weather comes on. During the cold weather they seem torpid, and a barrister told me things are always quiet with them at that season. But as the warmth brings bees out of a hive, so the heat sets them indulging in lawsuits. Burmans are not so polite as they were! this is generally noticed. The old form of "shikoh," which was the salute, is gradually dying out, although I saw a very fine example of it when staying with a Commissioner up country. We were sitting in the verandah, and an official came up with papers from the Commissioner's court. Removing his slippers, he knelt

down, put his hands together as if praying, at the same time pointing them towards the sahib; then touched his own forehead and bent down almost to the ground. But the majority of the Burmese are now getting much more "equalised," through, alas! our English influence; and it is the same in India. A few years ago every native was obliged to lower his umbrella when passing a European; now they won't do it, except in quite country districts.

The native dress of the Burmese is very picturesque. The men and women wear bright-coloured silk skirts and a white short jacket. The men have on their head a tightly bound handkerchief, with the end standing up at the side like a cockade. The women wear a scarf round their necks and "stole ends," in a colour that blends with the skirt, and their thick blue-black hair is coiled on the top of their heads, with another coil added in many cases. Then a pink rose or an orchid is neatly tucked in at the one side the front, or a fringe of mimosa flowers all round, as fancy dictates.

The Burmese ladies are very vain: they are not going to hide their faces like their purdah sisters in India—dear me, no! I watched one doing her toilet in the market place one day. She had some little silver bowls in front of her, and a mirror in her hand. From one bowl she took some paint-like substance, and made a brown semi-circle round the roots of her hair on her forehead. Then the eyes had to be touched up, and the whole face smeared

with what gave one the impression of being grey ashes, but is really thanaka, the bark of a tree ground to paste. The effect is not pleasing, giving a suggestion of jaundice, or an over-powdered European face. Still, "one touch of nature makes the whole world kin," and as paint and powder have played their part through all ages and races so far, one may call it surely "second" nature. When the ladies hold up painted parasols, of Chinese shape (which they choose with great care to go with their costume), the *tout ensemble* is charming, especially when the brilliant sun shines through the oiled silk, and throws up its rich colouring. I was told that the Burmese women are getting very particular about colour; a certain shade is fashionable for a time, and has "a run," and then it is of no use to make it any more, as they will have none of it!

I must not forget the chief accessory—the big cigar, which men and women alike smoke, and tradition says so do the babies as soon as they can walk. They are enormous cigars; no "tweenies" for them, thank you, but good solid ones, twelve or fifteen inches long, and thick in proportion. They are made of chopped tobacco leaves, and a part of the stalk, mixed with the pith of the Euphorbia, and boiled up with palm-sugar. This is all encased in a leaf of the teak tree, with the ends tucked in, and a piece of cotton or ribbon holds it together. Naturally, being so large, the women's mouths are made rounder than they need be! Very rarely are these cigars out of their mouths.

Certainly at prayers in the pagoda one sees them laid down by the side of the devoutly-kneeling worshippers, but the moment a woman gets up the cigar is lifted off the ground, and, still alight, is put into her mouth. At large " pwes " or entertainments one cigar is often passed from mouth to mouth. In youth, the men and women resemble each other greatly; it is often difficult to distinguish the sexes. Some say that the man wears his long hair on the top of his head, and the women at the back! Another way of distinction is the tattooing of the man from the waist to the knee, giving the effect of a tight pair of trousers. Tradition says this custom was originally started by one of the kings for the express reason of showing which were the men! It is done with lampblack from the burning of sessamum oil, and a regular profession is carried on by a race called the Saafa. Animals chiefly form the favourite design. With regard to the tattooing, I heard of a Buddhist priest who wanted to enter the priesthood, and had to pass an examination. Having failed several times, he was remarked during the course of the last examination to be looking gravely down at his legs, and it was discovered that the answers to the questions were tattooed thereon!

It was with mingled feelings we took the steamer back to Calcutta. The people had been most fascinating, but the country at that time of year was somewhat dried up, so that on the whole one was not overwhelmed with regret at leaving the intensely hot temperature for cooler Calcutta.

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